



Carolina Bird Club
www.carolinabirdclub.org

CBC Newsletter

ISSN No. 0162-7120

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

Volume 66

February 2020

Number 1

Spring 2020: Back to the Mountains

April 30 through May 3, 2020

by Marilyn Westphal & Karyl Gabriel, Meeting Planners

We will be returning to the mountains again for the 2020 Spring CBC Meeting in Black Mountain, NC about 10 miles east of Asheville. So it will be time to brush up once again on those mountain warblers and other neotropical migrants that typically breed or travel through the mountains of WNC.



Blackburnian Warbler -
Photo by Jeff Lewis

Black Mountain is close to the entrance to the Blue Ridge Parkway, so many of the trips will be on or near the parkway both north and south of Asheville, as well as in the adjacent Pisgah National Forest, all great places for migratory songbirds. Expect typical mountain breeding species such as Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Chestnut-sided, Canada, Worm-eating, Blackburnian, Swainson's, Cerulean, and many other warblers as well as many tanagers, grosbeaks, thrushes, vireos, and possibly the always unpredictable Red Crossbills. Other sites visited will be along the Blue Ridge Escarpment and at local parks, good places for many other species, and at Max Patch, a historically reliable spot for Golden-winged Warblers and many other warblers. Meeting dates are April 30th to May 3rd.



Max Patch -
Photo courtesy of AshevilleTrails.com

For those who wish to get a head start on warbler identification, Simon Thompson, owner of Ventures Birding Tours and long-time CBC member, will be providing a warm-up class on Thursday evening, so you'll be ready to head out with confidence on Friday morning. On Friday evening, mountain birders Marilyn Westphal and Marcus Simpson will be discussing their project monitoring Northern Saw-whet Owls nest boxes in the WNC mountains, and on Saturday evening John Carpenter of the Wildlife Diversity Project, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, will introduce plans for proposed NC Breeding Bird Atlas, a long-awaited project for many of us in North Carolina. This will be a great opportunity to learn how to get involved.



YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly

The meeting will be held at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly at the Blue Ridge Center, a hotel-like facility, but not a for-profit hotel, on a large, beautiful, wooded property with miles of walking trails and good birding on-site. As this is not a hotel, reservations will be made through CBC. Total cost for single rooms for three nights including three breakfasts (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) and two dinners (Friday and Saturday evening) will be \$374, and double rooms for three nights including three breakfasts and two dinners will be \$225 per person (there is no tax as this is a non-profit facility). All meals are buffet style and include gluten free and vegetarian choices. Those not staying at the facility can purchase tickets in advance for meal/meals only. For those staying only two nights the rate will be reduced accordingly.

(continued on page 2)

In this Issue

- CBC Spring 2020 Meeting
- New Members
- Nandina. Bad for birds?
- Outer Banks Trip Recap
- Bonus Trip—Costa Rica
- How I Got Into Birding
- Finding & Reporting Rare Birds
- Great Backyard Bird Count
- Costa Rica Trip Recap

Spring 2020: Back to the Mountains (continued from page 1)

There may also be an opportunity to purchase bag lunches for those going out on all-day trips if planned sufficiently ahead. All rooms have two queen beds and include access to Wifi, but have no TV's or refrigerators. Bring a cooler if you need to keep something cold. Ice will be provided on-site. As this is a YMCA facility, alcoholic beverages must remain out of sight of the public and can only be consumed inside guest rooms and meeting rooms.

More in-depth information and trip descriptions will be provided in the next newsletter. Looking forward to spring in the mountains!



Welcome New CBC Members!

Daniel Abrahams
Columbia, SC

Nora Futrell
Hanahan, SC

Nancy Hadley
Charleston, SC

Lynn Trenning
Charleston, SC

Daniel Turner
Charleston, SC

Erin Szarek
Conway, SC

Ann Stinely
Cary, NC

Diane Williams
Chapel Hill, NC

Lisa & Jerry Cash
Belmont, NC

Joanne Abel
Durham, NC

Michael O'Sullivan
Columbia, MD

Kathleen Bowman
Southport, NC

Rick, Jennifer & Wren Spencer
Matthews, NC

Patti & Tony Cifelli
Southern Pines, NC

Anne & David Johnson
Purlear, NC

Lori Arent
Raleigh, NC

Juliana Henderson
Raleigh, NC

Andrew Wolf
Eldersburg, MD

Kathy Resener
Irmo, SC

William Watkins
Columbia, SC

Nandina is Toxic to Birds and Other Animals



Nandina -
Photo by Deborah Roy

Do you recognize this plant? It is known as Nandina, Sacred Bamboo, or Heavenly Bamboo. It is located in all of the lower 48 states and it commonly planted in yards, parks, and around businesses. Nandina is an invasive, non-native plant, and its berries, as well as the leaves, are laden with cyanide and other alkaloids that produce highly toxic hydrogen cyanide which is extremely poisonous to all animals. Cyanide poisoning and death can occur rapidly, usually within minutes to an hour.

To protect our wildlife and our pets, please consider removing these plants from your landscape and planting native plants such as Spicebush, Winterberry, Rabbiteye Blueberry, or Persimmon. If this is not a possibility, please cut off the berry branches and dispose of properly.

The link below is for a research article that was done after dozens of Cedar Waxwings were found dead. The cause of death was found to be caused from the ingestion of Nandina berries. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3005831/>



Opportunities for Young Birders

Carolina Bird Club offers scholarships for birders 19 and under living in the Carolinas, who are members of the Carolina Young Birders Club.

Scholarships provide assistance in attending bird-related events, such as camps, workshop, training programs or CBC seasonal meetings.

For more information, visit www.carolinabirdclub.org

Trip Recap

CBC field trip to the Outer Banks of NC - December 14-15, 2019

by Steve Shultz

A witches' coven of Carolina Bird Club members pounded sand, cruised gravel roads, scrambled over rocks, and bushwhacked through Salt-meadow Cordgrass on a very good (some may successfully argue "great") "bonus trip" this past weekend to the Outer Banks and associated inland Refuge areas of Eastern NC. Bonus trips are one of the occasional non-seasonal meetings sponsored by the club.



Oregon Inlet -
Photo by Richard Hayes

Although the weather prognosticators suggested a quite damp and challenging Saturday, we endured just one 45-minute band of rain, time well-spent under cover of the Pea Island Visitor Center porch (American Bittern and White-winged Scoter highlights).



Photo by Richard Hayes

We started the morning at a foggy Oregon Inlet. Dolphins frolicked in the mist, appearing as grey ghosts just yards from the rocks, as we made our way to the seaward point. By this time the sun popped out, providing a photographers' dream of sun, mist, sea, and dunes. Back at the parking lot, Ryan Justice spotted the Ash-throated Flycatcher that had been MIA since its original sighting the prior weekend, providing great looks for all.



Ash-throated Flycatcher -
Photo by Phil Fowler

North Pond provided nice encounters with the standard ducks, swans, avocets, and godwits, along with Peregrine Falcon and another White-winged Scoter, this one actually in the pond. Kent Fiala and Ryan Justice found a pair of Common Goldeneye at the NE corner of the pond, and Karen Hogan spotted another pair later in a different spot.



Photo by Richard Hayes

Our bird count for the day was in the 80-species range when we headed over to Alligator River NWR to look for the recently reported Rough-legged Hawk. While the bird remained elusive, we enjoyed bobcat, bear (in the same view at the same time!) a covey of Bobwhite and displaying woodcock.

Sunday dawned bright, clear, and surprisingly still. All heard Virginia Rail calling, and several saw the slinky little birds at Bodie Island before we headed south and hiked out to the old inlet at Split Pea for maritime sparrows. Here we enjoyed the "Marsh Grand Slam" of Nelson's, Saltmarsh, and Seaside Sparrows along with Marsh and Sedge Wrens.



American Oystercatchers -
Photo by Phil Fowler

Now over 100 species for the weekend, and with few likely targets remaining along the immediate shore, we repaired inland to Alligator for another try at the Rough-legged Hawk. This time we found it, but only a few attendees got decent looks as the bird apparently successful made a kill, and then proceeded to stay out of sight. Another, or maybe the same, bear made an appearance, as well as a lone turkey.

Heading west, we navigated the often tricky roads to Pungo. Along the way, rocking along to the all-80s channel, I noticed a bird on the wire that looked, well, it looked like a Western Kingbird. It's hard to stop a train of six cars, so I pinged Ryan Justice, who was at the back of the line. He thought the same thing, and they volunteered to go back and check. Sure enough, Western Kingbird! So we all made the 3-point turns for a look-see.



Western Kingbird -
Photo by Phil Fowler

The goal of this expedition was to try and find Sandhill Cranes at Pungo. And we arrived to the sight of six loafing a hundred yards away. But the sight and sound of hundreds and hundreds of Tundra Swans flying over or standing in the shallow water was just as impressive.



Sandhill Cranes -
Photo by Richard Hayes



Tundra Swan -
Photo by Phil Fowler

We ended the trip with 122 species, bear, bobcat, otter, Inshore Bottle-nosed Dolphin, deer, and a great group dinner at Blue Water Grille.

While this trip is in the record books, I hope to see you on a CBC trip in the future!

CBC COSTA RICA BONUS TRIP APRIL 11-21, 2020



JOIN CAROLINA BIRD CLUB AND LIFE BIRD TOURS FOR 10 DAYS OF BIRDING SOME OF COSTA RICA'S BEST HOT SPOTS INCLUDING LA SELVA, SAVEGRE VALLEY AND CARARA NATIONAL PARK. THIS WILL BE ANOTHER FANTASTIC COSTA RICA ADVENTURE WITH CBC MEMBER SHERRY LANE OF LIFE BIRD TOURS, LLC AND EXCELLENT LOCAL BIRD GUIDE STEVEN EASLEY WHO HAVE LED 5 PRIOR CBC BONUS TRIPS FOR THE CAROLINA BIRD CLUB TO COSTA RICA. WE EXPECT TO SEE APPROXIMATELY 300 SPECIES OF BIRDS INCLUDING MANY HUMMINGBIRDS, PARROTS, TROGONS, TOUCANS, MOTMOTS, AND OF COURSE THE STUNNING RESPLENDENT QUETZAL!



IF YOU WANT TO JOIN US ON THIS BONUS TRIP, PLEASE CONTACT SHERRY LANE BY EMAIL.

Slane360@yahoo.com

Sign up is on a first come first serve basis and you must be a member of Carolina Bird Club.

How I Got Into Birding

By Jill Midgett



Jill Midgett

I guess I am a birder because my Father fed backyard birds when I was a child. We had no feeders and there was no pattern or plan to it. He worked for a grocery store and brought home bags of seed which had broken in the store. The seed was broadcast daily on a sandy patch in our backyard until the bag was empty. Blue Jays, Northern Cardinals, doves, sparrows, and the occasional Northern Mockingbird joined in. It would be decades before I learned about field guides, saw them, and learned their complete names.

My Father appreciated plants, wildlife, the weather and nature. At least once a year a male Cardinal would knock itself “out” on our 1950’s “picture” window. He rescued these birds and always showed them to me before he let them go. I vividly remember him saying softly “son of bitch” when they bit down on that soft patch between the thumb and forefinger. Many years later I experienced that same thing on one thrilling day helping Will Post retrieve birds at his banding station on James Island. Blue Grosbeaks bit down on me as they had on my father. It took me a very long time to realize my Daddy was a keen observer and admirer of nature.

He and I were glued to our B&W TV every Sunday watching Mutual of Omaha’s Wild Kingdom and the occasional wildlife video on Walt Disney’s Wonderful World of Color. We’re talking Pre-PBS BBC Nature and David Attenborough folks!

Growing up in West Palm Beach, Florida in the 60’s, we spent many weekend afternoons at the beach. Traveling to and from the still unspoiled barrier islands, I learned a few more birds – Sea Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Sea Gulls and oh yes, the Mosquito Hawk - insert smiley face emoji here. But I spent as much time as possible with a mask and snorkel, underwater observing. This made me a shell collector and I finally asked for and got what was a field guide. My 6th grade teacher saw the observer in me and did something which now stuns me. He found a microscope, brought in his college biology text, gave me jar of “pond scum” and assigned me to draw what I saw on the slides he taught me to prepare. I’d give anything to have that little notebook today.



Great Blue Heron Family - Photo by Jill Midgett



Red-eyed Vireo -
Photo by Jill Midgett

I went on to study botany and microbiology. Believe it or not there is much beauty in what is seen under a microscope and in a petri dish. My interest in the observation of details in nature was leading me to my career of diagnostic microbiology and infection control. But birds were out there for me. One Saturday on a botany class field trip near Gainesville, FL, my eyes were opened to what would become an enduring source of joy in my life. Our professor, wearing his pith helmet and khaki field gear (mind you this was pre L.L. Bean and Gortex), pointed to the sky and quietly said “Swallow Tailed Kite.” I saw a black and white “X” for a moment. I asked him to repeat what he said and he grinned as he told me. Yes, I still remember that moment. And I knew then that I needed to know more. I nearly lost my shoes in a swamp that day and ripped my jeans climbing through a barbed wire fence. It didn’t stop me from going to the campus bookstore and finding my first field guide. The Audubon paperback with a vinyl cover. That was my first mistake. I was not a birder yet. And it was ok because birding was not in my vocabulary.

My second mistake was never going anywhere to find birds. I didn’t know that was something that anyone would do. I kept the guide in my house and when I had another “what is that?!?!” moment, I looked it up. My life changed a few years after college when I moved to Chapel Hill, NC in Fall of ’82. Eastern Towhees appeared on time every evening to throw backyard leaves in the air; Brown Creepers went up and White Breasted Nuthatches went down the pine outside my living room window. Dozens of Cedar Waxwings and American Robins descended on cedar trees and I learned to hear the waxwings before I saw them. Now I **wanted** to get better at this. Two years in a row a Blue Grosbeak appeared in a blooming Dogwood on my birthday. Now I **really** wanted to get better at this. I asked my sister for binoculars for Christmas. I was on my way.

(continued on page 6)

Want to share your own “How I Got Into Birding” story?
Please send your completed story to newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org.

How I Got Into Birding (continued from page 5)



Photo by Jill Midgett

A coworker was talking about birds she had seen in Wilmington on a winter weekend. I thought this woman is crazy or maybe I could be too. We became friends and one day she said “You know you can go to parks and places all over NC and see a bunch of birds.....” I asked her to take me. I learned a lot from her and then in year or so she said, “Do you know what migration is?,” Uh....I thought about wildebeest from some nature program.....nope. She explained it briefly and I was so clueless but wanted to learn more. She took to me to Masons’ Farm in Chapel Hill. In minutes, she conjured up Black and White and Black-throated Blue and Green Warblers. Now I earned the right to look at the Fall Confusing Warblers section of the Peterson’s field guide I finally purchased. I was officially intimidated and knew this would be a lifelong hobby.

I created a life list in that paperback Petersons. I carried my bins on every business trip and vacation I took around the US and abroad. My life list grew. Sometime in the late ‘90’s, that friend told me about the Carolina Birds List serve, and this led us to the Carolina Bird Club! I know we went to Elkin, and I think it was in 1998. On a trip to the Outer Banks, I saw my first bird through a spotting scope, thanks to Kent Fiala for a perfect male American Kestrel in the ARNWR. By then, I was confident in describing myself as a *bird-watcher*. And of course, I wanted a spotting scope. My friend and I bought new field guides for each other’s birthdays and Christmas for years. The one who dies with the most field guides wins.

I moved to Charleston, SC in 2000 and I was surrounded by places to see incredible birds. I was so motivated by the variety here, that I sucked up my courage and attended a fall workshop in Cape May with Pete Dunne, Pat and Clay Sutton and other birding glitterati whose names I forget. I bought used Zeiss 10X42 bins from friends I met there. I spent the equivalent of a mortgage payment for them. A couple years later I took Ornithology with Dennis Forsythe in his last class at The Citadel in 2002, I think. It was incredible. Who knew wrens sounded like my Grandmother’s Singer Sewing Machine. I learned so very much. Thank you, Dennis. I think by then, birding was a verb, but it didn’t matter because after that, I WAS A BIRDER. My career took to me to Maryland in 2004 and Connecticut in 2009. In New England my bird world exploded. I attended my 1st Christmas Bird Count slogging through 6 inches of wet snow on the grounds of a nuclear power plant. I still remember showing my driver’s license to a guard who had what looked like an AK-47 strapped to his chest. The birds were few, but wow, these people were serious birders and that day I was one of them. We birded spring, fall and winter weekends for several years. I saw Connecticut Warblers in Connecticut and Snowy Owls in Massachusetts so close to me I didn’t need bins. My first Snowy made me cry. Our leader did a double take and asked me if I was ok. Yes, I was so much more than OK, I was thanking God (Not Harry Potter). During my last year in New England, my Zeiss bins and precious Peterson guide with my life list were stolen from my car in a hospital parking lot. I was so sad and angry. It took me a year to buy new bins. Crazy, right? I’d give them away right now, to have that guide back.

I’ve birded in other states and countries and added to my toolbox and passport. I finally got a scope, thanks to Derb Carter. And thanks to the CBC I was able to travel with him and others to Cuba. I’ve since been twice to Costa Rica with Sherry Lane and other CBC birders. I hope to bird in Africa later this year. It will bring back memories of Marlin Perkins and Jim Fowler because yes, we will be looking also for 4-legged non-feathered species! I am now determined to bird internationally each year. I bird because it takes me to a place of peace and excitement sometimes at the same time. It has introduced me to so very many kind, witty, helpful, and fun people. And halleluiah they are getting younger! It has taken me to a pasture where Fidel Castro’s comrades hid in the woods not long after I was born. And each morning it takes me to a window to laugh at 3 pairs of Bluebirds fighting over their turn at the mealworms and taking hits from the Boss Man Mockingbird. If I am watching the usual suspects in my back yard, pulling off the road to check for chick heads in the Osprey nest I pass every day, or giving bird guides to people who catch my fever. I am so happy to be a birder. I’ve still got so much to learn, and so many more birds to see. That’s the best thing about this, I never get bored. I continually learn and I still appreciate a chickadee as much as I do a rarity in another country. Once you decide you are a birder, you are one for life. You don’t have to add to your list or even keep one. Just watch and enjoy every feathered miracle you see. They’re all over our planet. They’re more specialized than any other animal and oh yeah, they FLY!

Spring 2020 Natural History & Ornithology Highlights

For the entire list, please visit the link below:
<https://press.princeton.edu/catalogs//birds-natural-history>


Spread the Word About Your Birds!

Finding and Reporting Rare and Unusual Birds

By Craig Watson

If you have ever wondered how best to report rare and unusual birds and learn where to find them, here is a list of tools and venues available to you in the field or at home to spread the word about your great bird discoveries. Although some of these tools presented here are primarily for use in the Carolinas, some can be used anywhere in the world to report and discover rare and unusual birds.

When I first began birding, personal computers and cellular telephone technology were not available, so rare birds could not be posted to an email listserv until you got home, and you could not text or call someone from a cell phone to notify the birding community. Back then, a rotary phone, pay phone, and an old-fashioned “phone tree” were used to spread the word. However, with today’s technology, reports can be made in real time and others can enjoy your discovery immediately! Here are some of the better ways to share birding information using modern technology, and listed in order of ease of use and most effective from the field.

GroupMe App – North and South Carolina Rare Bird Alert –  this alert is by far the easiest to use and spread the word on your birds(s). With a quick text message on the app under each alert, the alert will go out to all members of the Group. To join the rare bird alert, click on the links below and follow the instructions. You can use this app directly from the field and let your fellow birders know of your discovery and the location. Each Group is monitored so please only share pertinent bird sightings and locations. This app can also be used on your home computer.

North Carolina - [CBC NC Rare Bird Alert](https://web.groupme.com/join_group/44042177/tdYiPA) or
[https://web.groupme.com/join_group/44042177/tdYiPA](https://web.groupme.com/join_group/52879351/5PT34NjX)
South Carolina - [CBC SC Rare Bird Alert](https://web.groupme.com/join_group/52879351/5PT34NjX) or
https://web.groupme.com/join_group/52879351/5PT34NjX

Carolina Birds Listserv – this listserv has been active for many years and is a quick way to get your word out via email. This requires that you be on a device that handles your email. This can also be done from the field and requires that there be cellular availability to send the email. It also requires a bit more typing than using the GroupMe app and when used in conjunction with the GroupMe app can be a very efficient and quick way of spreading the word. To join the Carolina Birds listserv, follow the instructions at this link: [Carolina Birds listserv](https://lists.duke.edu/sympa/info/carolinabirds)
<https://lists.duke.edu/sympa/info/carolinabirds>

eBird – this worldwide database for bird observations has multiple tools for reporting and finding out about rare and unusual birds, and also allows you to search for any species you have an interest in. First of all, the best way to use the database is to join the worldwide database. This is free and easily done by joining at: [Create eBird Account](https://ebird.org) or [eBird.org](https://ebird.org). Within eBird, any rare

bird that you report through the Mobile eBird app or online at eBird will be distributed through any number of rare eBird alerts. This reporting is dependent on when the report is submitted and the lag in time between submission and distribution of the processed report. This can take hours or days depending on when the report is submitted. The best way to use eBird for reporting rare birds is to use the eBird mobile app, document the rare bird in the field, and submit the report right away. To utilize the eBird rare bird reporting system, you should go to Manage My Alerts on your eBird home page and subscribe to any county, state, region, or country from where you want to receive rare bird alerts. If you want alerts sooner than later on eBird, set your alerts to *hourly*, otherwise you will receive alerts a day later.

On the Carolina Bird Club website, eBird rarities are updated frequently for North and South Carolina on another page that Kent has designed, and this is easily accessed by any device and is a very quick reference to what is being seen throughout your birding day in the Carolinas (again, dependent on the eBird report being submitted in a timely manner): <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/sightings/>

Recently, Kent Fiala developed a “widget” for use on your mobile device that directly links you to these eBird alerts for anywhere in the country or world. It can be an icon on your mobile device and when opened, it shows you what rare eBird reports are within a defined distance from your current location. As an example, I was recently in Michigan driving home and opened the widget/app, and saw that there was a Pacific Loon about 30 miles from my current location and I was able to change course and drive over to find the bird at the location the bird had just been reported! Here is a link to that great widget, and thank you Kent!
[Nearby Notable eBird Reports](https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/sightings/nearby.html) or
<https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/sightings/nearby.html>

Facebook – there are many Facebook pages in which you can post your rare bird photos, eBird checklists, and other information important to the birding community. This is most often done after your birding day is done or you have a break in your birding day, as it requires processing photos and uploading them to a device where you can open and easily create a Facebook post. Here are some of the most popular and widely used Facebook sites for posting rare bird alerts:

-**Carolina Rare Birds** – This page widely used for reporting rare birds in the Carolinas and requires approval by the moderators before the post appears, and approval is generally very quick.

-**Carolina Birders** – used by many birders and posts are available immediately *(continued on page 8)*

Spread the Word About Your Birds!
Finding and Reporting Rare and Unusual Birds (continued from page 7)

-Carolina Birders Photo Sharing Group – This page is often used by photographers and the birding community has learned to follow this page to check for rare birds.

-ABA Rare Bird Alert – This page is for ABA rarities and you can post, yet approval is required by the moderators.

-What's This Bird? – This page has become one of the most popular by birders, photographers, and by Facebook users simply wanting to identify birds. Many people like this site as unknown rare birds often show up here without the user knowing all of the available networks to report rare birds. A great example of this is the recent report of the Shiny Cowbird in Charleston, SC. This bird appeared at a feeder and the observer knew it was “different”, reported it on this FB page, and many birders were able to view the bird at her home.

Ok, this is a LOT of information, but use of these tools becomes easy and second nature after some practice. Here is an example of how I would use these tools. Let's say that I observe a Eurasian Wigeon at Pitt St. Causeway in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. I carefully document the field marks for my eBird report and take a photograph of the bird in the water. I immediately open the SC Rare Bird Alert on the GroupMe app and type in Eurasian Wigeon at Pitt St. Causeway, Mount Pleasant, SC being observed now near the oyster restoration site, hit send, and all of the SC Rare Bird Alert subscribers receive the message immediately. I can then open up my email on my phone and type a short

message to the Carolina Birds listserv and send out, and all those subscribing to the listserv will receive this on email as soon as it is sent out. When I'm through birding, I submit my eBird checklist, and in an hour or so, anyone subscribing to eBird alerts can check their various eBird alerts. And if I choose to, I can post something to Facebook pages later. Woohoo! The WORD is out on your discovery!

Using one of these tools or a combination of these tools will ensure that information is disseminated quickly to the birding community. I encourage you to try out these various tools, and if you do not want to use the tools, there is still the telephone method! Remember, timing is important and it is best to report the bird as soon as possible through one of these venues. The GroupMe app alert and the listserv are the quickest. In many cases, birds are reported the following day or longer, and the bird has moved on, so I encourage you to act quick and get the word out!

Finally, locations of rare and unusual birds should not be reported for eBird sensitive species and for those species located on private lands (unless public access and permission is granted). Many of these species need protection from any level of disturbance and trespassing to view birds is never an acceptable behavior. Additionally, there are other circumstances in which rare birds should not be reported, so please consider your circumstances before reporting. Here is a link to the eBird sensitive species list: [eBird Sensitive Species List](https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000803210-sensitive-species-in-ebird). (<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000803210-sensitive-species-in-ebird>)

The Next Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)
is February 14-17, 2020

What is GBBC? Bird watchers of all ages count birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are.

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time. Now, more than 160,000 people of all ages and walks of life worldwide join the four-day count each February.

For at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, February 14-17, 2020, simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world, for as long as you wish!

How Do I Record My Counts? Go to Birdcount.org and click on Submit Observations. If you do not have an account, you will need to create one prior to submitting observations. That's it! Happy Birding!

**How many
birds can
you find?**

**23rd Annual Great
Backyard Bird Count**

February 14-17, 2020

birdcount.org



White-breasted Nuthatch. Photo: Ulf Kirchdorfer/Great Backyard Bird Count

Trip Report

Costa Rica Caribbean to Cloud Forest Tour for Carolina Bird Club

December 4-15, 2019

by Amanda & Paul Laurent

Epic Nature Tours guides, Paul and Amanda Laurent, led an amazing 12 day birding tour to Costa Rica with the Carolina Bird Club this past December 4-15, 2019. It was a small group of just three guests and two trip leaders. We saw a total of 259



Great Green Macaws -
Photo Courtesy of Epic Nature Tours

species of birds. Some species highlights include 2 Sunbittern, dozens of Great Green Macaws, and 5 Resplendent Quetzals. We saw a total of 31 endemics including Spangle-cheeked Tanagers, Golden-browed Chlorophonias, and Volcano Juncos. While birds were our primary focus, we of course saw many mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Highlights include the Talamancan Palm Pit Viper, which is an endemic snake only found in the Cloud Forest of Costa Rica. We also saw three species of poison frogs: Black and Green Poison Frog, Lovely Poison Frog, and Strawberry Poison Frog. Of course, a proper trip to Costa Rica is not complete without seeing the Hoffman's Two-toed Sloths, Three-toed Sloths, Capuchin Monkeys, Mantled Howler Monkeys, and Spider Monkeys. An amazing variety of wild-



Resplendent Quetzal -
Photo Courtesy of Epic Nature Tours

life, adventurous and enthusiastic participants, and knowledgeable trip leaders made this a successful and fun birding trip to Costa Rica!

Our adventure began in San Jose, where we picked up our group at the airport and saw our first bird of the trip - the rare and elusive... house sparrow! After that exciting find, we loaded everyone's bags into our two SUVs for a short drive to a nearby hotel for the night. While still in the city, we were still able to see a range of birds, including Rufus-naped Wren, Hoffman's Woodpecker, and Yellow-headed Caracara. Many birds are beginning to expand their range from the Pacific Coast into the Central Valley, so we were able to see quite a few birds that we would be out of range for the rest of our trip.

The next morning we got up early and quickly put the big city in our rearview mirror as we drove east towards the Caribbean fishing village of Manzanillo. The drive to the Caribbean was scenic, taking us through lush mountain landscapes and alongside tropical coastlines where we were able to see Montezuma Oropendolas, Roadside Hawks, and our first sloth of the trip. The cloudy skies turned to a light (and occasionally not so light) rain, but we did not let that dampen our spirits! We were slightly delayed by a pair of Slaty-tailed Trogons and a family of Collared Aracaris along the road. We arrived at our lodge in the Caribbean in time for a walk down a private trail to the beach where we found a Collared Plover in a small flock of other shorebird.

The next morning we understood the true meaning of the term 'rain forest' as we spent the morning listening to the sounds of the rain dance on the tin roof of the covered porch of our house. We didn't mind the rain since it gave us the pleasure of watching Long-billed Hermits and other hummingbirds dodge raindrops as they buzzed from flower to flower right in front of us. Before long, the rain lightened and we were able to meet up with our incredible local guide Abel to enjoy a bird walk along the edge of town before exploring jungle trails of the Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge. Highlights included Crested Caracaras, Pale-vented Pigeons, Mealy Parrots, Masked Tityras, and a Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher.



Talamanca Hummingbird -
Photo Courtesy of Epic Nature Tours

As we explored deeper into the jungle we were able to find a gorgeous Yellow Eyelash Pit Viper that we admired from a distance. We also found Strawberry Poison Frogs and Lovely Poison Frogs on this hike.

The next morning we were up early to look for tanagers and songbirds in the gardens north of town before we met up with our local guide Abel to kayak up the Punta Uva River. On our previous trip we saw two Sunbitterns up this river, so we hoped they might still be hanging out in the same area. The paddle up river took us past Long-nosed Bats under a small bridge, a seven foot long Spectacled Caiman on the bank, a small flock of Dusky-faced Tanagers, several Bay Wrens, and much more. We reached the area known to have Sunbitterns, but none were to be found. Several participants of our group climbed up the bank to check some of the small tributary creeks, but still no sign of the elusive birds could be found. We paddled back thinking we had missed our best chance at finding a Sunbittern. As we came around the next bend, we found ourselves face to face with not one, but two Sunbitterns looking at us from a fallen log on the edge of the river! The stunning birds were quite cooperative, and stayed just in front of us for close to twenty minutes as we slowly drifted back down the river.

(continued on page 10)

Trip Report

Costa Rica Caribbean to Cloud Forest Tour for Carolina Bird Club (*continued from page 9*)

Each time we got too close they spread their wings and flew just down the bank, showing their beautiful sunburst wing patterns each time. Quite pleased with ourselves, we finished our paddle and returned to the lodge to dry off a bit.

After lunch we drove up an incredibly steep hill to visit the ARA Project. ARA is a nonprofit organization doing incredible work reintroducing the Great Green Macaw to the Caribbean lowlands. During our visit at ARA, we were able to learn about the conservation work surrounding these amazing birds, and watch several dozen wild macaws fly above our heads. While the macaws took front and center on the stage, we also had fantastic views of Keel-billed and Yellow-throated Toucans.



Keel-billed Toucan -
Photo Courtesy of Epic Nature Tours

The next morning we enjoyed an amazing breakfast at a local restaurant called Bread & Chocolate (it is very well named). Next we headed north to visit Cahuita National Park. The park covers the entirety of a peninsula sticking out into the Caribbean Sea consisting of both Primary and Secondary Rainforest habitats. The trail begins with a boardwalk through a flooded rainforest that takes you out to the beach. The next stretch continues along the beach, crosses a small river, and eventually cuts back into the jungle. It is a remarkable series of habitats with an incredible variety of birds. We spotted American Pygmy Kingfishers, Shining Honeycreepers, Band-tailed Barbthroats, Black-crowned Antshrikes, Bay Wrens, White-collared Manakins and many others. We also got closeup views of White-faced Monkeys and North American Racoons, as well as Central American Ameivas (a medium sized lizard), Emerald Basilisks (much bigger lizards), and an Olive Keelback (a long, skinny snake).

The next morning we bid farewell to the Caribbean and traveled inland to the tiny little village of Bambu. We made a quick stop on the side of the road for a pair of long-tailed tyrants on our way to Bambu. Once we reached Bambu we climbed aboard a dugout canoe with an outboard engine in the back for a ride down the Sixola River and then up the Yorkin River to the indigenous Bribri community of Yorkin. The village is situated on the border of Costa Rica and Panama with the Yorkin and Sixola rivers being natural borders of the two countries.

Along the way we saw Amazon Kingfishers, Ringed Kingfishers, Squirrel Cuckoo, and more. The Bribri people in Yorkin have an organic cacao farm where they make farm to bar chocolate. During our visit we were able to learn the process of making chocolate from raw fruit to the finished product; 100% dark chocolate. We were able to participate in roasting cacao beans, removing the outer shells, grinding the beans, and then enjoying the purest chocolate possible atop fresh organic bananas served on a banana leaf! The homemade chocolate was made even sweeter by the Snowy Cotinga, Short-tailed Night-hawks, Yellow-crowned Euphonia, Fasciated Antshrikes, White-necked Jacobin, Plain-colored Tanager, and much more! We spent the night in a traditional, open-air round house and fell asleep to the sounds of the jungle all around us.

We awoke the next morning to the sound of roosters and hens who were busy laying the eggs for our breakfast. After a few hours of birdwatching we were back in the canoe for an exciting ride down the river back to Bambu. Along the way we saw a Gray Hawk, lots of kingfishers, and Mangrove Swallows. Once back on land we bid farewell to our guide Abel and drove north into the hills of Turrialba. We stopped for lunch at a little restaurant WAY off the main road with some great birdfeeders and a stunning view of Lake Angostura. We enjoyed a delicious home cooked meal while watching White-tipped Doves, Chestnut-headed and Montezuma Oropendolas, and Brown Jays. After lunch we arrived at Guayabo Lodge in time for a quick walk around the gardens before dinner.

We began the next morning with a cup of gourmet coffee and a walk around the gardens where we saw a Red-headed Barbet, Black Phoebes, Common Chlorospingus, Barred Antshrike, Slate-throated Redstarts, and more Baltimore Orioles in one day than I have seen in my whole life in the US. We came back for a delicious breakfast and then visited the Guayabo National Monument, the oldest pre-columbian ruins in Costa Rica. These ancient ruins are hidden deep in the jungle, and the clearings made by archeologists, create a perfect place to go birdwatching as well as to learn about the history of the area. We watched a Golden-olive Woodpecker working on her nest, chased a pair of Black-throated Wrens through dense vegetation for at least ten minutes, and at the end, came into one of the best mixed flocks of birds I have ever experienced! In the span of a few minutes we saw, Streak-headed Woodcreepers, Buff-throated Foliage-gleaners, Mistletoe Tyrannulet, Olive-striped Flycatchers, Slaty-capped Flycatchers, Scale-crested Pygmy-tyrant, Rufous-winged Tanager, Bay-headed Tanager, Red-throated Ant-tanagers, and more! Upon our return to the lodge we had a well-earned lunch followed by a



Laughing Falcon -
Photo Courtesy of Epic Nature Tours

relaxing walk around the gardens. We then ventured down one of the lodges nature preserve trails leading to Aquiares River and a beautiful waterfall. On the way back up we were watching a flock of Chlorospingus in the bushes. We turned around to see what else may nearby and noticed there was a Laughing Falcon perched in the open in a dead tree less than 20 yards away! It was a great way to end the day.

(continued on page 11)

Trip Report

Costa Rica Caribbean to Cloud Forest Tour for Carolina Bird Club (continued from page 10)

The following morning we headed up a very steep and mostly unpaved road to visit the Irazu Volcano. It was the most adventurous drive of the whole trip, and was highlighted by a Sooty Thrush and a Coyote that ran across the road in front of us. Sadly the entire volcano was clouded in so thickly we could not see twenty feet in front of us, so we had to abort our visit to the top. We decided to continue heading south to our next stop, the little town of San Gerardo de Dota, nestled in the Savegre Valley. After winding along the PanAm highway, we turned onto an incredibly steep little road down to the Savegre Valley.

After a quick stop to observe a beautiful native Red-tailed Hawk, which look very different from the ones here locally, and another stop for Spot-crowned Woodcreepers and Collared Redstarts, we arrived at Savegre Hotel. This is a stunning eco-lodge nestled deep in the valley with gardens and orchards full of birds in all directions. The most exciting non-bird sighting of the trip happened that night on the walk back from dinner. We found a stunning Talamancan Palm Pit Viper crossing the sidewalk in front of us! This is an incredibly rare snake that few people ever have the chance to see. It was first discovered in 2016 and is only found in the high mountains of southern Costa Rica! After some pictures, we continued on and let the snake go on its way.

The next morning we woke up really early to meet our guide, Marino, to go to look for the Resplendent Quetzal. We found 4 of them, along with Black Guans, Black-cheeked Warblers, Flame-throated Warblers, Ruddy Treerunner, Golden-browed Chlorophonias, Sulphur-winged Parakeets, Ochraceous Wrens, Gray-breasted Wood-Wrens, Flame-colored Tanagers, Townsend's Warblers, Sooty-caped Chlorospingus, Long-tailed Silky-flycatchers, the list goes on... There was a minor incident involving two of our party, a donkey, and a rather upset horse, but other than that it was an incredible bird walk.

For lunch we went to Miriam's Quetzals - the most famous restaurant in the Valley with a renowned birdfeeder off the back deck. We feasted on possibly the best trout on Earth



Flame-colored Tanager -
Photo Courtesy of Epic Nature Tours



Acorn Woodpecker - Photo Courtesy
of Epic Nature Tours

while watching Emerald Toucanets, Large-footed Finches, Sooty Thrush, Flame-colored Tanagers, White-throated Mountain-gems, Talamanca Hummingbirds, Scintillant Hummingbirds, Lesser Violetears, Acorn Woodpeckers, Yellow-thighed Finches, and more. While some thought the day could not get any better, our next stop was the Batsu Gardens - a beautiful garden built around an apple orchard with a dozen hummingbird feeders and a fruit feeder for tanagers. We saw dozens of hummingbirds, and added Steely-vented Hummingbird to our list, along with White-naped Brush-finch, Chestnut-capped Brush-finch, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Tufted Flycatcher, Silver-throated Tanagers, Volcano Hummingbird, Stripe-tailed Hummingbird, and many others.

The next morning we enjoyed a delicious breakfast, and then got really high! The mountain at the top of the Savegre Valley is called Cerro de la Muerte or "Hill of Death," and is the third highest peak in Costa Rica. The top of the mountain is called the Paramo, and it is high above the timberline and home to birds found nowhere else on earth. As we drove up the steep dirt road toward the peak some of our group thought it would be fun to walk the road instead. The wiser members of the group continued to drive instead. After an effortless drive up for some...and a strenuous but breathtakingly beautiful hike for others...we reached the summit. There, we found Timberline Wrens, Slaty Flowerpiercers, Peg-billed Finches, Volcano Juncos and more. We stopped at a roadside restaurant for coffee and to check out their birdfeeders. We learned that the Fiery-throated Hummingbirds were nesting at that time of year further down the mountain and were sadly not visible. For lunch we went back to Miriam's Quetzals for another round of trout and some more time watching the Emerald Toucanets and Acorn Woodpeckers at her feeder. As we were about ready to leave, a stunning male Resplendent Quetzal swooped in and landed in a tree not far from the deck. We were unregrettably delayed for some time. Eventually some of our group decided to drive a short ways down the valley to check out an indigenous crafts store for some souvenir shopping, and the rest spent a bit longer birdwatching at Miriams. Once we were all reunited we made one more quick stop on the way back to our lodge where we found Spangle-cheeked Tanagers in a bush just off the road. Some late afternoon wandering around the lodge lead us to a Torrent Tyrannulet at the end of the day.



Resplendent Quetzal -
Photo Courtesy of Epic Nature Tours

Our last day began with a wild goose chase, or in this case, a wild Rufous-collared Sparrow chase through the hotel lobby. Once the bird was successfully relocated, we all piled into the SUV and began our drive to San Jose to catch our flights home.



Carolina Bird Club
www.carolinabirdclub.org

Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
1809 Lakepark Drive
Raleigh, NC 27612

Periodicals Postage Paid
at Pinehurst, NC 28374
and additional mailing offices

Upcoming CBC Meetings

Spring - Black Mountain, NC - April 30 - May 3, 2020

Winter - Outer Banks, NC - January 14 - 17, 2021

CBC Board Members

President

Lewis Burke, Columbia, SC
lewisburkej@yahoo.com

Vice Presidents

Martina Nordstrand, Indian Trail, NC
Guy McGrane, Deep Gap, NC
Craig Watson, Mount Pleasant, SC

Secretary

Jill Midgett, Charleston, SC

Treasurer

Paul Dayer, Durham, NC

NC Members-at-Large

Lester Coble, Ernul, NC
Marilyn Westphal, Hendersonville, NC
Sandra Gahlinger, Morehead City, NC
Karyl Gabriel, High Point, NC

SC Members-at-Large

Ed Blitch, Charleston, SC
Mac Williams, Hartsville, SC

Immediate Past President: Christine Stoughton Root

Editor of The Chat: Steve Shultz

Website Editor: Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC

Headquarters Secretary: Carol Bowman, Pinehurst, NC,
hq@carolinabirdclub.org

CBC Newsletter Editor: Deborah McDougall Roy, Charlotte, NC,
newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org

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

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The *CBC Newsletter* is published bimonthly by Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Founded in 1937, the membership is open to anyone interested in birds, natural history, and conservation. **Current dues are:** Individual & non-profit, \$30; Family and Business, \$35; Student, \$15; Patron, \$50 and up; Life, \$500; Associate Life (in household with Life Member), \$100 (both Life memberships can be paid in four annual installments).

Membership dues include access to publications: the *CBC Newsletter* and *The Chat*, which is only available on line. Tax deductible as allowable by law.

Cost for CBC bird checklists, including postage: 10@\$5.45, 25@\$13.40, 50@\$27.00, and 100@\$54.00.

Join the CBC at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/dues/>. Enter change of address at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile/>. Order checklists from: CBC Headquarters Secretary, 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst, NC 28374. Copyright © 2020.