



# CBC Newsletter

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

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## Carolina Bird Club To Hold Winter Meeting on the Outer Banks of North Carolina!



After this very hot and steamy summer you might be ready to wake up on a frosty morning, step out on the balcony to look over the ocean, and within minutes not be able to feel your nose. A quick duck inside for hot coffee and a nose warmer and you are back out to catch a glimpse of those strings of scoters buzzing just above the frothy waves. Sound like fun?!

When you receive this Newsletter, the warblers, vireos, thrushes and orioles that grace the United States and Canada during the summer are winging their way south, and while many birders thoughts are on sorting "confusing fall warblers", it's already time to start thinking about the Carolina Bird Club's winter meeting. Scheduled for January 28-30, 2011, the winter meeting will be held at a perennially popular location, the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

Headquartered in Nags Head/Kill Devil Hills, trips will fan out to locations including Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Cape Hatteras Point, Alligator River NWR, Roanoke Island, Oregon Inlet, Pocosin Lakes NWR and Buxton Woods to search for wintering waterfowl, passerines, resident birdlife, and maybe that stray or vagrant whose blank checkbox has been eyeing you seductively from your life list.

The variety of habitats, from ocean to impoundment, from maritime forest to pocosin, promises opportunities to see a wide variety of birds and other wildlife.

The last time the CBC winter meeting was held at the Outer Banks, a respectable 181 species of birds were tallied. Maybe this year we'll find even more!

The headquarters hotel will again be the Ramada Plaza Nags Head Beach in Kill Devil Hills, NC. With a recent renovation completed, the hotel remains one of the most accommodating properties on the northern Banks. Ocean view rooms are \$75 or, for those preferring to keep an eye on the birds perched on the highway's power lines, street view rooms are \$55 per night, both double occupancy. Budget an additional 12.75% for taxes that are not included in the rates above. To reserve your room, call the Ramada Plaza at (800) 635-1824 or (252) 441-2151 and request the CBC meeting rate. The street address is 1701 S Virginia Dare Trail, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948. Each room offers microwave, refrigerator, coffeemaker, hair dryer, and in-room safe. Complimentary internet is available throughout the property.

Look for a registration form and trip descriptions in the next CBC Newsletter.

Rumor has it there may be an exciting new event added to the Saturday afternoon program! Stay tuned and make your plans now to see old friends, make new ones, see great birds and hear from excellent speakers in January on the Outer Banks!

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# A New Way to Predict Arrival Dates

Jason Courter



Along with the joys of flying colors and colorful spring songs, birds bring us mystery and curious things to think about. Recent research is finding that some birds are arriving earlier in spring than they did a few decades ago, while other species' arrival time seem to be unchanged. This brings thoughts of why, and are their food sources changing?

We have initiated a study at Clemson University to evaluate these questions and are developing a new method to predict arrival dates. And maybe you have been keeping track of some arrival dates that could help in understanding the mystery.

Bird populations continue to face multiple stressors that affect their habitats and survival needs. One concern is about the potential long-term impacts of climate change. Growing evidence tells us that spring events are occurring earlier across the United States than they did 50 years ago, and that some birds are migrating earlier whereas others are not. Traditional calendar dates are becoming less accurate predictors of their arrival, and there is concern about whether food resources will respond in a similar way and be available when birds arrive.

We are proposing a new method to predict bird arrival, independent of calendar-dates, using accumulated heat units called 'growing degree-days.' 'Growing degree-days (GDD)' is a concept familiar to farmers and is based on the principle that physiological processes in many organisms respond to accumulated temperature. Units accumulate one 'degree-day' for each degree the average daily temperature remains above a pre-defined base level. Considerable attention has been focused on GDD in relation to insect emergence and crop growth, but no study has examined bird response. For example, in spring, plants begin to grow when enough heat units have accumulated. Insects also respond, and when larvae begin to feed on tree leaves or other plants, birds are usually there feeding on the larvae. This well-timed food web, from sun and warmth to plants to insects to birds, has worked well for hundreds of years, but now some birds may not be there when the larvae or other food becomes available. Not only could this disconnect affect birds, but it may also affect

farmers that rely on birds to eat certain insect pests.

We are in the process of correlating historical bird arrival data (1880-1970) from the North American Bird Phenology Program at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bpp/>) to historical temperature data and comparing when the same heat accumulation levels are met in the present-day. Our results will provide a baseline of historical arrival times and a current pattern of 'expected' arrival dates. Deviations from 'expected' arrival dates may help us identify birds that face the greatest risk from climate change events and how we might best respond.

We are currently looking for bird arrival data from (1970-2010) at specific locations in the eastern United States. We are most interested in the date of first arrival, but will soon be expanding our analysis to include dates of nesting. We are especially interested in information regarding Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Chimney Swift, Purple Martin, Eastern Kingbird, Barn Swallow, Great Crested Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, American Redstart, and Black-throated Green Warbler. If anyone has data that he/she would like to contribute to this study, or knows of a potential data source, please contact Jason Courter ([jcourte@clemson.edu](mailto:jcourte@clemson.edu); 616-240-2397), PhD student at Clemson University, or his faculty advisor, Dr. Ron Johnson ([ronj@clemson.edu](mailto:ronj@clemson.edu)).

## Birding Trail Site Featured in *Wildlife in North Carolina*

Raft Swamp Farms, one of the birding sites in the Piedmont guide to the North Carolina Birding Trail, was recently featured in an edition of *Wildlife in North Carolina* magazine, a publication of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. The Hoke County property was once a tobacco and cotton farm, but is now transforming to a wildlife-rich display of sustainable land use practices. Jackie and Louie Hough welcome visitors. See <http://tinyurl.com/24rflb6> for the magazine article and [www.raftswampfarms.org/](http://www.raftswampfarms.org/) for visitor information.



# Trip Report: Southeastern Arizona

Steve Shultz



The evening of May 27th found thirteen birders from the Carolinas (and a little bitty bit of New York) convening in Tucson, Arizona for six days of birding in and among the “sky islands” of the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts. The trip will end up tallying 148 species of birds, one rattlesnake, one Gila Monster, one lost wallet, one found wallet (not the same as the one lost), one lost cell phone (later found), one lost camera, one broken toe, and two skinned shins. All in all, a normal week of birding.

We start by venturing north to Arivaipa Canyon to find Common Black-Hawk, quickly succeed, and then add Zone-tailed Hawk and Mississippi Kite to our raptor list. Harris’s Hawk and a beautiful dark-phased Red-tailed Hawk add to the day’s tally. This day holds the honor as the only time that we partake of a meal at a business whose primary focus is selling gasoline.

The next morning finds the group at Madera Canyon where Greater Pewee, Elegant Trogon, Berylline Hummingbird, Varied Bunting and other Arizona specialties vie for attention with a Mazda Miata that has somehow found its way atop a large rock in one of the parking areas.

Saturday evening is that iconic Madera Canyon experience, the “Elf Owl Extravaganza” at Santa Rita Lodge. Here we get the bonus of an aerobic workout swatting mosquitos that no doubt find the “Extravaganza” to their liking.

Sunday is a drive and bird day as we make our way from Madera Canyon south to Nogales and east to Sierra Vista and the mighty Huachuca Mountains. Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, White-faced Ibis and other waders show well at the Rio Rico Ponds, while Thick-billed Kingbirds punctuate a visit to the famed Patagonia Rest Area near the town of, you guessed it, Patagonia.

Home of what must be best known Violet-crowned Hummingbird site in the country, Patagonia also provides us with a tasty lunch and the number one most important item for any travelling production, public

restrooms. We even find a copy of “Birds of the Carolinas” in the little secondhand bookstore here.

The next two nights are in Sierra Vista, which makes an excellent base of operations for ventures into the east-facing canyons of the Huachucas. On our way into town we stop at the local Lowe’s Home Improvement shop to check out the Great Horned Owls nesting inside the Garden Center. Two downy owlets occupy a pallet of terra cotta pots while mom lazily watches from a nearby rafter.

Monday means an exploration of Garden Canyon at Ft. Huachuca and then an extended visit to Miller Canyon for hummingbirds and owls. A pair of Mexican Spotted Owls has been easy to see this season along the Miller Canyon trail, and do not disappoint. Participants are able to view the owls with great ease, as the birds decide to perch directly above the trail! Red-faced and Black-throated Grey Warblers serenade the group on the way back to Beatty’s Guest Ranch and Apple Orchard. Beatty’s has the ultimate hummingbird feeder set-up, and with the recent installation of a refrigerator and stadium seats, it’s hard to imagine a more comfortable spot to watch the jeweled hummers stop by for a sip. Another Berylline is here, as well as Blue-throated, Magnificent, and more.

If it’s Tuesday, it must be Carr Canyon, and soon after sun-up we are in the pines atop the mountains looking at Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Grace’s Warbler, and yes, more Red-faced Warblers. Nests are aplenty and include Buff-breasted Flycatcher and Hutton’s Vireo.

The descent down the winding Carr Canyon road almost gets the better of the van’s transmission, but it gets us to Tucson, where we take a run up the Santa Catalina Highway and then visit Saguaro National Park where a Gila Monster puts in a well-received appearance.

I hope the participants on the trip has as enjoyable a time as I did, and like me, are already scheming on how to best make a return appearance to one of the United States’ birding meccas. Maybe I’ll see you there!



# Coastal Carolina Purple Martin Society 2010 Update

*Alisa Esposito*



Coastal Carolina Purple Martin Society, Inc, was formed in 2006 out of a grassroots movement with a mission to protect the roost of 100,000+ Purple Martins gathering annually to roost at William B. Umstead bridge, a 2.8-mile span between mainland Dare County, NC, and the popular tourist destination, the Outer Banks. In addition to protecting the roost, through public education, we promote the conservation of martins throughout North Carolina's coastal plain.

It was discovered through a local research program in 2004-2005 that between 2,000 and 3,600 birds were killed each year by vehicle traffic. 77% of mortality occurred in early morning hours by an average of just 20 local vehicles per morning. Our first major success as an organization came in early 2007 when we were able to work with NCDOT, the state Department of Transportation, Dare County Commissioners, and state Senator Marc Basnight to establish a speed zone reduction area marked by speed zone signs and flashing lights. These alert drivers to the presence of birds during roost activity periods from July through September, beseeching them to slow down from 55 mph to 20 mph. Through these past four years watching over our unique and beautiful roost, CCPMS is pleased to report that mortality has decreased significantly. We know this from annual, yet informal, estimates collected by board members, but our future and necessary goal is the hiring of an intern to follow up our 2005 research model with fresh data. This will provide us with specifics to compare to 2005, showing us exactly how well our public education and speed reduction efforts have paid off, and will allow us to make further recommendations for the protection of our birds if necessary. Additionally, the CCPMS works with the NCDOT and US Fish and Wildlife Service, alerts local and state law enforcement to the presence of the birds, assists area "landlords" and "wannabees" with problems and questions, provides free public education seminars, and hosts two annual eco-tour sunset cruises aboard the 65-foot headboat, the Crystal Dawn.

In 2005, the PMCA (Purple Martin Conservation Association) began a wonderful matching grant fund

drive, where PMCA members helped the Manns Harbor roost effort with monetary contributions. With those funds we were able to open doors to local understanding; build awareness of the roost's plight with a festival, art show, and sunset cruise; develop important educational materials; and begin our first public education events. These events have always been well attended. Each year more and more people attend our programs, and it is a joy for me, as CCPMS's chair and educator, to share our roost with excited and interested visitors.

By far our most exciting and important event is the sunset cruise eco-tour, a fundraiser for our birds, that makes it possible for participants to experience, up close and personal, 100,000+ martins in dynamic flight across the backdrop of a vibrant Outer Banks sunset. Because the roost is on a low bridge (less than 30 feet), and the cruise is aboard a tall headboat, we are virtually eye-level with all the frantic high-energy roosting action, and with all the associated high-decibel chatter. We welcome many of the same attendees back on board the boat each year; they wouldn't miss it for the world!

Each night during the summer months there are approximately 20-30 visitors gathered at the foot of the bridge to witness the spectacle from land. Even though the foot of the bridge provides adequate viewing, it has never been optimal. The angle is less than satisfying, it can be crowded, the area can sometimes be messy with fishing refuse, and without a rail it was less than safe place to be. That is why I am very excited to announce that this spring Dare County completed construction of a beautiful wheelchair-accessible fishing pier and Purple Martin viewing area: Bebob's Public Multi-Use Pier! The site plans were funded in 2005 by the PMCA's Manns Harbor Roost Fund and developed cooperatively between myself, CCPMS chair, and the donating landowner, Malcolm Fearing. The idea was to bring a wheelchair-accessible fishing pier to the community with a dual purpose of serving the Purple Martin viewing public. Mr. Fearing donated the land to Dare County to

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Purple Martins (continued)

memorialize his sister, who died of Multiple Sclerosis. She was nicknamed “Bebop” and loved to fish. The fishing pier makes a public fishing hole available to all, regardless of ability or challenge, while the angle of the pier with relation to the bridge allows for fantastic views of the roost activity and gorgeous Croatan Sound sunsets. Raring to go, we started the first phase of development in 2006 before the parking area was even installed. We placed an educational kiosk that informs visitors about the unique and fascinating history of our roost (this kiosk was also funded in part by a grant from the PMCA). Next came a Lonestar Alamo [martin] house set beside the kiosk, which still, frustratingly, has no occupants—we will not give up hope, however! Manns Harbor Beautification Committee and Rotary Club donated the flower planting to spruce it all up, and the location is now a true destination and a really wonderful place to visit any time of the year. Kayakers and canoeists use a simple put-in to launch their craft. Each year we see more and more boaters out on the Sound enjoying the birds, and mostly keeping a safe and respectable distance.

One of my frustrations with past viewing from land has been that the western waters and sunset were blocked by the marsh grasses and trees. Now, not only will the gazebo and pier offer superior roost view-

ing free and clear of obstruction, we also will be in the best possible position to view the multitude of birds coursing through the skies and over the water’s surface as they approach the bridge coming from the west. Completion of this pier is an exciting new beginning for the Manns Harbor community, but for me personally, it brings a gratifying high to what began in 2003 with my dismal discovery of the imperiled roost.

Because we could not practically erect highly effective fencing to help reduce mortality—and we do continue to lose an estimated 200+ birds a year, every new step in creating community pride and general awareness about our roost will be another positive step toward dropping mortality even further.

On behalf of the 100,000+ birds at Manns Harbor bridge and their human caretakers, CCPMS wants to thank PMCA members for support throughout the years; without your encouragement and help we wouldn’t have gotten so far so fast. In memory of all the birds who have died at this roost for the past 30 years, and in celebration of the wonderful gathering of life present in our community each year, CCPMS will continue to raise awareness and advocate for our birds into the future.

## 14th Annual Wings Over Water Festival Coming to the Beautiful North Carolina Outer Banks

The 14th annual Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival is coming fast! Held November 9-14, 2010 on North Carolina's beautiful Outer Banks, "WOW" offers birding trips, photography workshops, Red Wolf howlings, paddle trips, and more. The keynote speaker for this year's event is Bill Thompson. You may know Bill from his work at Birdwatcher's Digest, his articles on birding and bird identification, or his most recent book "The Young Birder's Guide to Birds of Eastern North America", which is part of the fabled Peterson Field Guide Series. The keynote will change venues this year, with the Friday evening event held at the North Carolina Aquarium on Roanoke Island.

Birding highlights include an opportunity to visit South Pond at Pea Island NWR, which is usually closed to admittance; trips at Oregon Inlet and Bodie Island lighthouse to wade through coastal marshes in search of rails, bitterns, and maritime sparrows; hummingbird banding demonstrations; and good chances to see the rare Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

A calendar of events, field trip descriptions, registration information, and more is available online at [www.wingsoverwater.org](http://www.wingsoverwater.org), by e-mail from [WOW@CoastalWildlifeRefuge.com](mailto:WOW@CoastalWildlifeRefuge.com), or by phone by calling (252) 216-WING (9464).





## Birder's Book Review

Steve Shultz



*Nightjars, Potoos, Frogmouth, Oilbird, and Owlet-Nightjars of the World*

Nigel Cleere

Cloth 464 pages

Princeton University Press 2010

ISBN 978-0-691-14857-1

The first time I saw a picture of a Pennant-winged Nightjar I thought it was, without a doubt, the coolest bird in the world. A cryptically plumaged, usually-hard-to-see bird with these brilliant white pennants streaming from the wings of the breeding males. Unbelievable! And then I saw the Standard-winged Nightjar's picture. The name in no way does justice to the spectacular elongated second primary feather on each wing. These "standards" make the bird look like someone combined the DNA of a poorwill and a motmot to see what might be created. In a word, stunning. And that's just the beginning. The Lyre-tailed and Long-tailed Nightjars of South America are no less spectacular. And then there are the Frogmouths. With oversize bills and owl-like eyes, it's hard not to chuckle at the otherworldly visages of these strange birds.

A new guide by Nigel Cleere presents all 135 known species of Caprimulgidae (nightjars), Steatornithida (Oilbird), Podargidae (frogmouths) and Aegontheidae (owlet-nightjars), including five that are only known from single specimens. At 464 pages, the book is hefty, and includes more than 580 color photographs and 135 color maps.

*Nightjars, Potoos, Frogmouth, Oilbird, and Owlet-Nightjars of the World* begins with an introduction to these fascinating birds, including a discussion on distribution, general plumage characteristics, biology, and taxonomy. From here on the pages are filled with exquisite photographs of all known species. Obviously the ones that are only known from specimens are photographs of museum skins, but the photos of live birds are incredible, especially considering that the subjects are often extremely well-camouflaged.

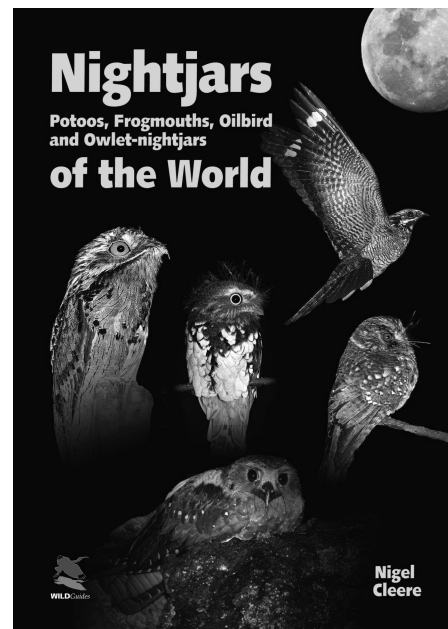
Each species is covered on two to four pages that usually include several large (half-page) photographs.

Short written descriptions are provided covering size, identification (including those species most likely to be confused with the subject bird), vocalizations, preferred habitat, breeding details, range, and abundance. An interesting feature is a color-coded indicator showing the relative level of conservation concern attributed to each species.

As I leafed through this book I was fascinated by the diversity of species in families of birds that, in the United States, consist of a number of fairly similar looking birds. It seems that in the tropics the nightjars and allies reach their greatest, and most spectacular, diversity. From the Papuan Frogmouth, which I think is a dead ringer for Jabba the Hut of Star Wars fame, to the Spangled Owlet-nightjar, which can be best described as "cute", these are some fascinating creatures, made all the more interesting by the excellent photographs incorporated into the species accounts.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book supports Birdlife International's Preserving Extinctions Programme, which includes seven species of nightjar and one type of owlet-nightjar.

Overall a worthwhile addition to the bookshelf of anyone who is fascinated by birds and especially those ghosts of the night, the nightjars (and friends).



## Proposal to Introduce Whooping Cranes into Louisiana

While the only remaining wild flock of Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*) shuttles between Texas and Canada, both resident and wintering birds once occupied parts of Louisiana. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to create an experimental population of Whooping Cranes in Louisiana, specifically the Chenier coastal plain in the White Lake area. The Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, states: "With just under 400 birds in the wild, the vast majority of which winter along the Texas coast, Whooping Cranes are among our nation's most threatened species. Our proposal to reintroduce a population in Louisiana would not only help protect this iconic species from extinction, but would also help us take another big step in our campaign to restore the Gulf Coast's wildlife, marshes, and coasts to health."

Public comment on several alternatives for establishing a non-migratory population at the White Lake Wetland Conservation Area is invited. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is seeking comments on the proposal as well as options for the geographic boundary

for the population and the potential effects of the reintroduction on other native species and the ecosystem.

An extensive FAQ can be found at:

<http://www.fws.gov/southeast/news/2010/whoopingcranefaq.doc>

Comments are due by October 18, 2010. Comments can be entered online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), or mailed to:

Public Comments Processing  
Attn: FWS-R4-ES-2010-0057  
Division of Policy and Directives Management  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
4401 N. Fairfax Dr, Suite 222  
Arlington, VA 22203

Comments on the draft environmental assessment can be submitted to [LouisianaCranesEA@fws.gov](mailto:LouisianaCranesEA@fws.gov), or by mail to:


Lafayette Field Office  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
646 Cajundome Blvd, Suite 400  
Lafayette, LA 70506

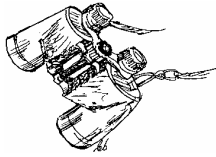
## Read The Chat and the Newsletter anywhere you have Internet access!

The most recent editions of the Newsletter and The Chat are online on the CBC website. Older editions of The Chat are free for anyone to download, but the CBC Newsletter and the two most recent calendar years of The Chat are available only to CBC members. 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.

<b>Welcome New Members!</b>	David Field Abbott Mt. Pleasant, SC	Anne Davidson Mount Holly, NC	Dr. Jeffrey Kline Charleston, SC	Bernita and Bruce Colvin Clemmons, NC
	Robert & Dorothy Anchell Fort Mill, SC	John Carpenter Wilmington, NC	Jean Dilworth Waxhaw, NC	Wanda Potts Mt. Pleasant, SC
	Teri Bergin Mt. Pleasant, SC	Ashley Harris Charlotte, NC	Kathy Tinius Silver Spring, MD	



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

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### Upcoming CBC Meetings

Nags Head, NC January 28-30 2011  
Blowing Rock, NC May 6-8, 2011

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piephofft@aol.com

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4201 Sentimental Lane, Apex, NC 27539

919-779-2826, newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org

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

**Headquarters Secretary**, Dana Harris, Bloomington, IL  
630-453-8270, hq@carolinabirdclub.org

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

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