



Carolina Bird Club  
www.carolinabirdclub.org

# CBC Newsletter

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

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## Happy New Year to Our Membership!



A new year of birding has begun. The Carolina Bird Club is maintained primarily by volunteers, to include the Executive Board, our editors of *The Chat* and the newsletters. The Executive Board strives to produce three successful Seasonal Meetings every year. This includes coordinating the accommodations, banquet, guest speakers, field trips and field trip leaders, who are also volunteers. We all share the same passion for birding: conservation and preservation.

To continue on this path requires volunteers to keep the Carolina Bird Club vital. To that end, please support the CBC by completing the two online surveys at [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org).

Thank you!

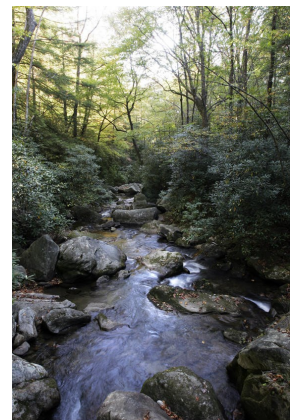
*Christine Stoughton-Root*

## Springtime in the North Carolina Mountains

By Marilyn Westphal and Karyl Gabriel

The 2018 CBC Spring Meeting, Friday, April 27 and Saturday, April 28, will once again be visiting a favorite spring birding location at the southern end of the North Carolina mountains. Flat Rock, on the eastern side of Hendersonville, is conveniently located between the Blue Ridge Escarpment, where the mountains descend abruptly to the piedmont, and the beautiful Pisgah National Forest and Blue Ridge Parkway. This area includes a range of elevations from one thousand to over six thousand feet with habitats from wetlands, pasture/farmland, to deciduous and coniferous forests, and the variety of songbirds found in the area can be amazing. Within 50 miles of the meeting site are twenty species of warbler, five species of vireo, thrushes, tanagers, orioles, crossbills. Many other species can be found breeding and many, many more songbirds use the area as a thruway to more northern regions from late April into May.

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*Blue Ridge Escarpment  
(www.greenvillesc.com)*

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# Springtime in the North Carolina Mountains/Continued

By Marilyn Westphal and Karyl Gabriel



*Pisgah National Forest (USDA)*

Choose trips from some of the most favored hotspots in the southern Appalachians including the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Pisgah National Forest and the Blue Ridge Escarpment, the Green River Gamelands, and a variety of local parks and greenways. Along the escarpment find some birder favorites like Swainson's, Kentucky, and Worm-eating Warblers, and at higher elevation sites in the forest and along the parkway Cerulean, Canada, Chestnut-sided, and Golden-winged Warblers. It's also a wonderful time of year for spring wildflowers.

For non-birders there are plenty of local sites to visit including the nearby Carl Sandburg home where you can bring yourself back in time to the 1950s, or go back even further in time to the 1890s and visit Biltmore House and Gardens in south Asheville, or stroll the gardens of the North Carolina Arboretum near Asheville only about 30 minutes away.

Our host hotel for the weekend will be the Mountain Lodge and Conference Center located at 42 McMurray Road in Flat Rock, NC , just off I-26. ([www.mountainlodgeflatrock.com](http://www.mountainlodgeflatrock.com)), (828-693-9910).

Check-in begins at 3pm and check-out is at 11am. The room rate is \$109 per night plus taxes, and includes a complimentary hot breakfast in the Fireplace Lounge each morning of your stay. The CBC rate is good for studio suites (two full beds or king bed with full kitchen) or one bedroom king suites (king bed with separate living room with sleeper sofa and full kitchen). The venue also offers an indoor pool, fitness center, free WiFi and daily housekeeping. There are a wide variety of restaurants within a short drive in Flat Rock and nearby Hendersonville.



*Mountain Lodge and Conference Center*



*Naturalist Julie Zickefoose*

The Friday evening program will be held at the Hendersonville City Operations Center near downtown Hendersonville and the Saturday evening program will be held at the Mountain Lodge and Conference Center. Following a brief social gathering the Friday evening speaker will be Derb Carter, Director of the Chapel Hill office of the Southern Environmental Law Center and winner of North Carolina Conservationist of the Year and National Wetlands Awards, who will share his experiences birding in Cuba. Following Saturday evening's buffet banquet our speaker is Julie Zickefoose.

Ms. Zickefoose is a widely published writer, artist and naturalist who writes and paints from Indigo Hill, her 80-acre sanctuary in the Appalachian foothills of Ohio. Her books include Letters from Eden, The Bluebird Effect, and Baby Birds: An Artist Looks into the Nest. Ms. Zickefoose will offer a selection of her books and art for sale. The buffet dinner Saturday evening is \$30 per person and will include a vegetarian option.

**There is something for everyone on this trip! We look forward to seeing you there.**

# Texas Gulf Coast and Rio Grande Valley Trip

## Our Best Bird—the Tamaulipas Crow

By Ron Clark



*Crested Caracaras. Photographed by Ron Clark.*

Eight of us arrived in San Antonio on Friday, November 10th. A walk around the block got us the common Great-tailed Grackle and White-winged Dove, but we also found our first Ladder-backed Woodpecker by the hotel. Leaving early on Saturday, we headed for the coast. Once we got off the interstate, we made a few roadside stops on our way to Choke Canyon State Park. Several Crested Caracaras and Harris's Hawks were seen, along with Great Kiskadees.

At the park, we got most of our ducks and



*Least Grebe. Photographed by Ron Clark.*

waders, along with Least Grebe, Neotropic Cormorant, Golden-fronted Woodpecker and Vermilion Flycatcher.



*Vermilion Flycatcher. Photographed by Ron Clark.*

After lunch in Three Rivers, we headed for Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, adding a few more ducks, waders and terns. Goose Creek State Park was closed due to Hurricane Harvey, so we stopped by the Big Tree, north of Rockport. It's a Virginia Live Oak, with estimated age between one thousand and two thousand years. It survived the hurricane with little damage. We stayed in Rockport, finishing the day with 82 species.

On Sunday, we made one stop before the Whooping Crane boat tour. It was a gray and occasionally rainy morning. Our crane total was 21, including four juveniles. Along with the birds, we got looks at a White-collared Peccary, also called Javelina, a large mammal that looks like a wild pig but isn't related to them, being a native to the Americas.

Rockport was devastated by Harvey. We saw many buildings with no roof or worse. Piles of trees and trash were constant. The largest was beside Bypass 35. There were two piles, one organic and one man-made, each roughly the size of a football field and 15 feet high.

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*Whooping Crane. Photographed by Ron Clark.*

## Texas Gulf Coast and Rio Grande Valley Trip/Continued

By Ron Clark



*White-tailed Hawk. Photographed by Ron Clark.*

The Port Aransas jetties gave us the rest of our gulls, terns and a few more shorebirds. Our next two stops were closed due to hurricane damage. On the way to Mustang Island State Park, also closed, we got good looks at a pair of White-tailed Hawks. Going back inland, we headed for Kingsville for the night, finishing with 110 species.

Monday morning started with a wild goose chase. Snow, Ross's and Greater White-fronted Geese use the fields south of town. The trick is to find them and hope they're close enough to see. We drove back and forth a few times as we saw them in the distance. We managed to get close enough to see them, about 200 yards out.

We never could pick out a Ross's but there were

plenty of the other two. Sandhill Cranes and Long-billed Curlews serenaded us while we watched. At Sarita Rest Stop, we got Brewer's Blackbirds, Green Jays and Lesser Goldfinches. Checking fields near Combes, we struck out on Mountain Plover and Sprague's Pipit, which winter in that area.

After a fabulous lunch at Mary's Mexican Cafe in Rio Hondo, we birded Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, adding Long-billed Thrasher, Plain Chachalaca and Greater Roadrunner. A "lost" Lazuli Bunting that had been reported there was seen by most of the group. After stopping on South Padre Island, we stayed in Brownsville, with 130 species under our belts.



*Green Jay. Photographed by Ron Clark.*



*Long-billed Thrasher. Photographed by Ron Clark.*



*Plain Chachalaca. Photographed by Ron Clark.*

We started our morning at Sabal Palms Sanctuary. Our best bird was a Tropical Parula, in with a small warbler flock. A Gray Hawk made a quick flyover. We also added White-tipped Dove, Wilson's Warbler and Buff-bellied Hummingbird.

## Texas Gulf Coast and Rio Grande Valley Trip/Continued

By Ron Clark

The Brownsville landfill was next, where Tamaulipas Crows had been reported after being gone for many years. I joked that it would be great to drive up and find someone looking at one. Well, that's what happened. A woman was waving to us, as she had it in her scope. Being a typical landfill, there are thousands of birds there; grackles, vultures, gulls, waders, etc. Luckily, the crow likes to perch near the road. We also picked up Bronzed Cowbird and Chihuahuan Raven. Tropical Kingbird and Bewick's Wren were added just outside the gate. After 45 minutes of smelling a landfill, we headed for lunch!



*Tamaulipas Crow. Photographed by Ron Clark.*

We drove Old Port Isabel Road until the holes started getting the size of the van. It's a good area for Aplomado Falcon. A falcon was seen 200 yards or more away. The size was good, so we walked down the railroad tracks to get closer. Oddly enough, the closer we got, the smaller it got. I guess the heat waves made it look bigger. In the end, it was a Kestrel, not even close to Aplomado size. Highway 100 has a hacking box from which Aplomado Falcons are released. It's usually a good spot as they often stay in the area. After some time, one flew behind us that most got to see. We finished the evening at Oliveira Park, where Red-crowned Parrots roost for the night. There were about 250, screaming as they came in and flying around us. Tuesday finished with 150 species and another night in Brownsville.



*Common Pauraque. Photographed by Ron Clark.*



*Clay-colored Thrush. Photographed by Ron. Clark.*

On Wednesday, we drove west to our first stop, Estero Llano Grande State Park in Weslaco. One highlight was seeing a Common Pauraque from less than ten feet, at its yearly roosting spot. We picked up Cave Swallow, Clay-colored Thrush, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Curve-billed Thrasher and McCall's subspecies of Eastern Screech-Owl. We visited three sites in the hot afternoon, but our only western species added was Altamira Oriole. Our evening finished at 166 species.

**/Continued P 6**

## Texas Gulf Coast and Rio Grande Valley Trip/Continued

By Ron Clark



*Altamira Oriole. Photographed by Ron Clark.*

A two-mile walk at Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park started our Thursday morning. We added Olive Sparrow, Black-crested Titmouse, Black Phoebe and got much better looks at a Gray Hawk, adult and juvenile. At Anzalduas County Park, we had a Ringed Kingfisher and, in Hidalgo, we saw six Monk Parakeet nests, with birds. There was just one nest five years ago, so they are doing well, as many non-native species tend to do. After one other stop, we finished at an evening roosting area for thousands of birds in McAllen. The main one we wanted was Green Parakeet. Around 300 showed up, along with Grackles, Starlings, Cowbirds, Pigeons and one Merlin, not sure which direction to try. The birds on the wires stretched for blocks in

all directions and were making quite a noise. The parakeet put us at 179.

Driving west on Friday morning, we got out of the endless city which the valley has become, not knowing where one city starts and another stops. It was good to get back into the country. Our first stop was Roma Bluffs, where we looked across the Rio Grande into Mexico. Sadly, an Audubon's Oriole sang a few times down the bluff, but was never seen. We added a Verdin at Salineno. No new western birds at Falcon State Park or Zapata. At San Ygnacio, we saw around ten White-Collared Seedeaters in the reeds, all young males or females. Viewing was very brief as they flew from cover to cover. Finally one sat up for several minutes for a great view. From there, we drove to Laredo for our lodging, with 183 species.



*Ringed Kingfisher. Photographed by Ron Clark.*

On Saturday, after spending some time at Lake Casa Blanca State Park, we went to Zacate Creek in southeastern Laredo. No new birds but we had a three Kingfisher morning. A pair of Ringed Kingfishers sat on the wire for excellent views, a Green Kingfisher stayed closer to the creek and a Belted Kingfisher made several passes. After walking some of the Las Palmas Trail, we turned northeast for the drive back to San Antonio. A small pond in Frio County gave us a chance to stretch out legs. There we added our last trip species, a Mallard, to finish with 184. Soon after, the van automatically pulled into a Dairy Queen, not the first one for the trip.

Except for some rain on the first weekend, we had great weather for birding. The Tamaulipas Crow was easily our best bird, followed by the Tropical Parula. We ate a lot of Mexican food, stopping at many taquerias in small towns. On a couple of days, it was lunch and dinner. Thanks to those who came for making it a fun trip.

# Welcome New CBC Members!

Sandra Angel  
Kernersville, NC

Brenda Currin  
Oxford, NC

Chuck Dollison  
Seneca, SC

Don Ellison  
Marty Baird  
Raleigh, NC

Jacob & Elaina Farmer  
Raleigh, NC

Howard & Cheri Ferguson  
Wilmington, NC

Holly Ferreira  
Hampstead, NC

Mike Greene  
Pinehurst, NC

Greg Hays  
Charlotte, NC

Cathy Murphy  
Richard Roland  
Jacksonville, FL

Jennifer Roberts  
Columbia, SC

Barbara & Len Schmitz  
Gaithersburg, MD

Michael Smith  
Holden Beach, NC

Jenna Stephens  
Chris Kenny  
Columbia, SC

Ed Stines  
Wilson, NC  
Joseph & Barbara Twiss  
 Mooresville, NC

Nathaniel Watkins  
Columbus, NC

Joseph & Cindy Waytula  
Goose Creek, SC

Mary Whiteacre  
Saint Cloud, FL

Gary Wiggins  
Raleigh, NC

Sierra Williams  
Amelia Court House, VA

Cynthia Wood  
Zionville, NC

## **MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**

Would you like to rename our Seasonal Meeting. What are your favorite sites for meetings? Two online membership surveys covering these and other topics are available at [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org). Your responses to these surveys provide guidance to the Executive Board to develop the CBC's annual and long-term strategic plans. Please respond to the surveys **thru Feb 20**. We value your in Input.

### **CBC Spring Executive Committee Election**

**We will need candidates to fill spots for SC Vice President and SC Member at Large.**

**SC Vice President is for one three-year term.**

**SC Member at Large is for a two year term and eligible for a second two year term.**

**If interested please send an email to [hq@carolinabirdclub.org](mailto:hq@carolinabirdclub.org), so we can discuss further what is involved!**

### **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](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org).

**CBC Research, educational and conservation grants are available through the Carolina Bird Club.**

**For additional information visit [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org).**



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www.carolinabirdclub.org

**Carolina Bird Club, Inc.**  
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and additional mailing offices

## Upcoming CBC Meetings

Spring 2018—Flat Rock, North Carolina

Fall 2018—Greenville, SC

Winter 2019—Outer Banks, NC

Spring 2019—Southern Pines, NC

### CBC Board Members

**President**, Christine Stoughton-Root,  
Merritt, NC  
[cssrbdr@gmail.com](mailto:cssrbdr@gmail.com)

**Vice Presidents**

Teri Bergin, Mt. Pleasant, SC  
Sherry Lane, Wilmington, NC  
Steve Tracy, Gastonia, NC

**Secretary**

Jeri Smart, Rolesville, NC

**Treasurer**

Paul Dayer, Durham, NC

**NC Members-at-Large**

Lester Coble, Ernul, NC  
Karyl Gabriel, High Point, NC  
Katherine Higgins, Wilmington, NC  
Marilyn Westphal, Hendersonville,  
NC

**SC Members-at-Large**

Lewis Burke, Columbia, SC  
Steve McInnis, Columbia, SC

**Immediate Past President** : Irvin Pitts

**Editor of The Chat**— Steve Shultz

**Website Editor**: Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC

**Headquarters Secretary**: Carol Bowman, Pinehurst, NC,  
[hq@carolinabirdclub.org](mailto:hq@carolinabirdclub.org)

**CBC Newsletter Editor**: Vivian Glover, Orangeburg, SC,  
[newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org)

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

**[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)—UPDATE**

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 the CBCs two publications the **CBC Newsletter** and **The Chat**. Tax deductible as required 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 © 2017.

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