



CBC Newsletter

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Ornithological Society of the Carolinas*

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Banner Elk Spring Meeting April 27 - April 30, 2023 By Paul Laurent

The North Carolina High Country is a remarkable place for birding in Springtime. The woods and meadows are filled with migrating warblers and much more. The rugged mountains capped with Spruce and Fir trees bear a striking resemblance to lands much further north - and many species of birds that normally just pass through the Carolinas on their way to northern breeding grounds have resident breeding populations in these mountains.

Many thousands of years ago advancing glaciers pushed plants and animals out of the far north and into what is today the Carolinas. When the ice ages ended and the glaciers retreated, those northern species of plants and animals followed the glaciers back north and recolonized their traditional ranges - except here in the High Country! Our tall mountains and abundant rainfall meant that the climate here has much more in common with Nova Scotia than New Bern, and many species of plants and animals that are normally associated with far northern climates can be found thriving in these southern mountains.

We can expect to see Common Ravens, Winter Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, Brown Creepers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, as well as Canada Warblers, Black-throated Blue Warblers, Black-throated Green Warblers, Blackburnian Warblers, Chestnut-sided Warblers, Hooded Warblers, & many others breeding in the dense forests and wildflower meadows of the High Country. Countless more birds pass through these mountains on their way further north each spring.

We will have outings to many of the best birding hot spots in the High Country, including the World-Famous Grandfather Mountain, spots along the Blue Ridge Parkway, and some fantastic local parks including Valle Crucis (which is the single best birding hotspot in the area), Brookshire Park, and the Greenway in Boone. Trout, Bass & Price Lakes are always magnets for warblers in the Spring. Trips north to Elk Knob and Rich Mountain Game Lands have the chance for Golden-winged Warblers and more.

Our Saturday banquet will be at the Best Western and feature keynote speaker Jesse Pope from the Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation. Unfortunately, logistical issues will prevent us from having the Saturday banquet at the new Grandfather Mountain Museum. We encourage everyone to try and find a chance to visit their new exhibits and see the remarkable birds on the Mountain!

Be prepared for cool weather, and potentially cold weather at higher elevations. If there has been rain before the meeting, trails could be wet and muddy, so waterproof hiking boots are a good idea for most outings. Weather can change quickly in the mountains so make sure to bring extra layers just in case! We will be based at the Best Western Mountain Lodge in Banner Elk, North Carolina. We have a block of rooms set aside for \$127.50 per night. You can reserve your room at this link:

https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.34151.html?groupId=114XY8K4

The Best Western is located at 1615 Tynecastle Hwy, Banner Elk, NC 28604

Spring Meeting Outings

We are still looking for Outings Leaders. If you are interested in being an Outings Leader for our Spring Meeting please email Paul Laurent at info@epicnaturetours.com

Half Day Trips

Trip 1, 9, 21, 29 - Valle Crucis Community Park

Valle Crucis Park is one of the top birding spots in the High Country, with over 180 species documented in a relatively small area. The Park is very flat and has a paved walkway as well as an unpaved path through a wildflower meadow. The combination of rivers, wetlands, forests and meadows make Valle Crucis a great spot to find a wide variety of birds from all of these habitats.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L424469>

Approximate Travel Time: 20 minutes (9 miles)

Conditions: Very easy - Flat walking paths. Much of the path is paved with an additional loop that is grassy.

Trip 2, 10, 22, 30 - Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation

Grandfather Mountain is the best birding spot in the High Country with over 200 species recorded on the mountain and over 100 species that breed on its slopes. This outing begins at the main gate and slowly climbs to the Swinging Bridge, stopping at Half-moon Overlook, Woods Walk, the Nature Museum, and Black Rock Trail along the way. Look for warblers, thrushes, and highland specialties like Common Raven, Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, Pine Siskin, & Red-breasted Nuthatch as well as migrating hawks and the resident Peregrine Falcons.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L440334>

Approximate Travel Time: 15 minutes (9 miles)

Conditions: Easy - Moderate - The trails we will be on are reasonably flat and well maintained, but Linville Peak and the Black Rock Trail are uneven and rocky. Bathrooms are present at the Museum and at the Bridge. There is a restaurant at the Museum.

Trip 3, 11, 23, 31 - Brookshire Park

Brookshire Park runs along the banks of the New River, with created wetlands on the other side of the raised bank. The path turns to gravel as it climbs a small hill into secondary forest habitat and then another meadow at the top. The wetlands are excellent habitat for a variety of sparrows and the woods are home to a variety of thrushes, warblers, and a resident Eastern Screech Owl.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L3000059>

Approximate Travel Time: 30 minutes (19 miles)

Conditions: Easy to Moderate - The first section of the greenway is flat and paved. The path up the hill is gravel and moderately steep

Trip 4,24 - Boone Greenway & Created Wetlands

The Boone Greenway runs along the New River with woods, fields and wetlands along the trail. The created wetlands are a great place to look for migrating rails as well as warblers and sparrows! The wide variety of habitats in a relatively small area can produce a wide variety of birds.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L3088296>

Approximate Travel Time: 30 minutes (17 miles)

Conditions: Very Easy - Greenway is flat and paved. There is a flat, gravel path around the created wetlands

Trip 5, 13, 25, 33 - Elk Valley Preserve & Banner Elk Mill Pond

Elk Valley Preserve belongs to Lees-McRae College and is a little-known birding hot spot sits along the Elk River and has a remarkable mix of meadows, wetlands, creeks, rivers, and forests. The variety of habitat makes it a great place to look for sparrows, warblers, woodpeckers, migrating waterfowl and more. This area is not heavily birded, so you never know what you might find! After exploring the Preserve we will stop by the Banner Elk Mill Pond to look for migrating waterfowl as well as rails and sparrows in the tall grass and wetlands

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L13253864>

Approximate Travel Time: 10 minutes (4.5 miles)

Conditions: Easy (but sometimes muddy and overgrown) - The trails are all flat, but unpaved and some are narrow. If there has been recent rain the area can get VERY muddy. The tall grasses and briers in the meadows can encroach on some of the paths. Hiking boots and long pants are recommended.

Trip 6, 14, 26, 34 - Trout Lake & Bass Lake

Trout and Bass Lakes are both amazing warbler hotspots. Trout Lake has breeding Black-throated Blue Warblers, Black-throated Green Warblers, Canada Warblers, Chestnut-sided Warblers, Hooded Warblers, Northern Parulas, Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers & more! Bass Lake is known for attracting migrating ducks as well as a wide range of warblers, woodpeckers and other forest songbirds.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L523242>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L472179>

Approximate Travel Time: 25 minutes (14 miles)

Conditions: Easy - Trout Lake has a flat, gravel path around it. Bass Lake has a flat path around the lake, and then a steeper path up the hill.

Trip 7, 16, 27, 36 - Julian Price Lake & Campground

Julian Price Lake is a fantastic birding spot. The 2 ½ mile trail around the lake provides a mix of habitats that often attracts migrating waterfowl, thrushes, warblers, flycatchers, woodpeckers and more. The campground does not open to campers until mid-May, so this mix of fields and forests should only be full of birds, not campers! The campground has had breeding Blackburnian Warblers the last two years as well as Swainson's Warblers and many other songbirds.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1048254>

Approximate Travel Time: 30 minutes (19 miles)

Conditions: Easy - There is a flat trail around the Lake, and a paved road through the campground. There are bathroom facilities in the campground, but there is a good chance they will be locked. There are bathrooms at the picnic area a few minutes up the road.

Trip 8, 28 - Rich Mountain Game Lands & Elk Knob State Park

This outing begins on the road up to Rich Mountain, an area known for Golden-winged Warblers as well as a good variety of sparrows and other grassland birds. From there we will bird up to Elk Knob State Park looking for Winter Wrens and other highland specialties. This outing will involve a lot of road side birding because some areas are open to hunting.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L902789>

Approximate Travel Time: 45 minutes (27 miles)

Conditions: Easy - Moderate - There will be a lot of roadside birding as well as some short hikes with uneven terrain.

Trip 12, 32 - Lewis Fork Overlook & Jeffress Park

Lewis Fork is a great place to find breeding warblers, and is one of the best spots around to find Cerulean Warblers. We will take our time birding along the Parkway at Lewis Fork before heading south to Jeffress Park, which has a 1 mile trail to a waterfall that is known for a variety of warblers, thrushes & more.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1158095>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1157162>

Approximate Travel Time: 50 minutes (33 miles)

Conditions: Easy - Moderate - Lewis Fork is roadside birding, so expect mostly flat terrain and short grass walking (watch for cars though). The trail to the waterfall is moderately steep and has some uneven footing. Bathrooms available at Jeffress Park.

Trip 15, 23, 35 - Green Knob Trail

This fantastic 2.3 mile trail begins at Sim's Pond and follows a small creek through the woods before climbing to an open pasture. The woods are home to a variety of warblers as well as Brown Creepers and Winter Wrens. A pair of Ravens have nested under the bridge for the last few years. The top of the hill offers great views and a chance for soaring raptors. The hike down goes through mixed forests that are home to a breeding population of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. The trail ends in a wildflower meadow with a view of Grandfather Mountain and the chance for Buntings, Sparrows and Warblers.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L4759098>

Approximate Travel Time: 30 minutes (16 miles)

Conditions: Moderate - This 2.3 mile trail has several steep sections as well as creek crossings, uneven surfaces, and a couple logs to climb over.

Trip 24 - Blue Ridge Conservation Campus

The BRC has a beautiful tract of land that begins in a wildflower meadow along Aho Branch and then extends up a wooded hillside. The recently completed two-miles trail winds through the forest and gives great chances to see a wide range of migratory songbirds. Since this is a relatively new property it has not been extensively birded, so you never know what might show up!

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L16319072>

Approximate Travel Time: 30 minutes (21 miles)

Conditions: Moderate - The meadow is flat with a short, grassy path. The trail up the hill is well graded and not too steep. Bathrooms are available at the BRC office.

Trip 45, 46 - Shawnee Rd above Beech Mtn Bog

Shawnee Rd runs along the ridgeline above Beech Mountain Bog. There is a great mix of woods and meadow habitat along the road, and the bog draws in a wider variety of birds than you would expect for such a habitat. This is a great spot for warblers and sparrows, as well as a decent chance for Black-billed Cuckoo (heard more often than seen). There are a few small ponds that draw in migrating waterfowl as well as flycatchers. The road leading up has a good spot for breeding Bobolinks.

If there is time, the outing will conclude at Valle Crucis Park or the Banner Elk Mill Pond.

Approximate Travel Time: 15 minutes (5 miles)

Conditions: Easy - There is parking along the road, and the road itself is relatively flat and paved with a grassy shoulder.

Full Day Trips

Trip 17, 37 - Grandfather Mountain

Grandfather Mountain is one of the best birding spots in the Carolinas, with over 200 species recorded and over 100 documented breeding species on its slopes. This all-day exploration of Grandfather Mountain begins with the first section of the Profile Trail, which has an incredible variety of breeding warblers, thrushes, vireos and more. We stop before the trail gets too steep and head south to the Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation, where we begin at the main gate and slowly climb to the Swinging Bridge, stopping at Half-moon Overlook, Woods Walk, the Nature Museum, and Black Rock Trail along the way. Look for warblers, thrushes, and highland specialties like Common Raven, Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, Pine Siskin, & Red-breasted Nuthatch as well as migrating hawks and the resident Peregrine Falcons. The trip concludes at the Boone Fork Overlook where we will hike along the Tanawha & Nuwati Trails on the mountains eastern slope.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L3018029>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L440334>

Approximate Travel Time: 6 minutes (3 miles)

Conditions: Moderate - There will be extended walking on uneven trails with some steep sections. Bathrooms are available at the Profile Trailhead as well as at the Museum and Bridge at Grandfather Mountain. There is a restaurant at the Museum.

Trip 42, 43 - Boone Fork Loop Trail & Surrounding Area

The Boone Fork Loop is a beautiful 5-mile trail that passes through a wildflower meadow, runs along a creek, then cuts deeper into the woods with a mix of rhododendron and mixed hardwood habitats. There is a spur trail down to Hebron Falls, which is a stunning set of cascading waterfalls. This gives a wide variety of habitats that are great for migrating warblers as well as sparrows and other songbirds. Afterwards there will be options to check Price Lake and the Price Lake Campground, Trout Lake, or the overlooks along Grandfather Mountain depending on what birds have been reported!

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L770359>

Approximate Travel Time: 30 minutes (19 miles)

Conditions: Moderate - This 5-mile trail is steep in some places and there are several stream crossings. The spur to Hebron Falls is very steep. There is a bathroom in the parking area.

Trip 19, 39, 48 - Blue Ridge Parkway South (Linn Cove Viaduct to Chestoa View)

This outing begins at the Linn Cove Viaduct, which is a great spot to find migrating warblers as well as hawks and ravens over Grandfather Mountain. From here you will follow the Blue Ridge Parkway south, stopping to hike up to Beacon Heights, and then checking the next several overlooks for mixed flocks of birds on the way to Linville Gorge. After exploring the gorge, the outing ends at Chestoa View, which has a stunning view and a short trail that will hopefully be full of migrating warblers!

Approximate Travel Time: 19 minutes (11 miles)

Conditions: Moderate - Short hikes at Beacon Heights & Linville Gorge are somewhat steep and rocky in a few places, the rest of the trip will be pretty flat and easy walking at various overlooks.

Trip 18, 38 - Blue Ridge Parkway North (Lewis Fork Overlook to Linn Cove Viaduct)

This outing begins at Lewis Fork Overlook, where we hope to find Cerulean Warblers as well as a variety of other breeding and migrant songbirds. Next we travel south to Jeffress Park for a 1 mile hike to the Cascades Waterfall on a trail that is known for warblers, thrushes and more. We will spend the rest of the day making our way down the Blue Ridge Parkway stopping at overlooks looking for mixed flocks passing through. There will be a short detour to check the Mount Vernon Baptist Church Cemetery for Bobolinks. There will be stops at Julian Price Lake to look for waterfowl and to check the campground for Blackburnian Warblers as well as at the Boone Fork Overlook for a brief hike if time allows. The trip will end at the Linn Cove Viaduct, which is known for great warblers as well as hawks and ravens flying over Grandfather Mountain.

Approximate Travel Time: 50 minutes (33 miles)

Conditions: Easy - Moderate - There will be several short hikes that will have steep sections and rocky, uneven terrain. Much of the outing will be flat and easy walking at various overlooks. There are bathroom facilities at Jeffress Park, Moses Cone Manor, & the Price Lake Picnic Area.

Trip 20, 40 - Price Lake & Green Knob Trail

This outing begins at the Price Lake Picnic Area to look for Indigo Buntings and other meadow species along the first part of the Boone Fork Loop Trail. It will continue to the Price Lake Campground and the trail around the Lake in search of breeding Blackburnian Warblers and a wide variety of other warblers, thrushes and flycatchers that can be found around Price Lake. After lunch we will hike the Green Knob Trail, which is about two hours of moderate to strenuous hiking through a fantastic variety of habitats with chances for a range of breeding warblers including Black-throated Blue and Green Warblers, Ovenbirds, and Canada Warblers as well as Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Brown Creepers, Common Ravens and more. The trail ends with a stunning view of Grandfather Mountain and a beautiful meadow that often produces Common Yellowthroats, Chestnut-sided Warblers, a range of sparrows and many other species.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L770359>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1048254>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L4759098>

Approximate Travel Time: 31 minutes (20 miles)

Conditions: Moderate - Strenuous - The Price Lake Picnic Area and the trail around Price Lake are very flat and easy, though there are uneven surfaces. The Green Knob Trail is steep in some places and requires several shallow stream crossings (waterproof hiking boots are recommended). There are also a few spots along the trail where you will have to cross fallen trees. There are bathroom facilities at the Price Lake Picnic Area.

Friday, April 28			Saturday, April 29		
Half-Day Morning			Half-Day Morning		
Trip 1	Valle Crucis Community Park	6:30	Trip 21	Valle Crucis Community Park	6:30
Trip 2	Grandfather Mtn. Stewardship Fndn.	8:30	Trip 22	Grandfather Mtn. Stewardship Fndn.	8:30
Trip 3	Brookshire Park	6:00	Trip 23	Brookshire Park	6:00
Trip 4	Boone Greenway & Created Wetland	6:00	Trip 24	Boone Greenway & Created Wetland	6:00
Trip 5	Elk Valley Pres. & Banner Elk Mill Pond	6:30	Trip 25	Elk Valley Pres. & Banner Elk Mill Pond	6:30
Trip 6	Trout Lake & Bass Lake	6:30	Trip 26	Trout Lake & Bass Lake	6:30
Trip 7	Price Lake & Campground	6:30	Trip 27	Price Lake & Campground	6:30
Trip 8	Rich Mtn. Game Lands & Elk Knob S.P.	5:45	Trip 28	Rich Mtn. Game Lands & Elk Knob S.P.	5:45
Trip 45	Shawnee Road above Beech Mtn. Bog	6:30	Trip 46	Shawnee Road above Beech Mtn. Bog	6:30
Half-Day Afternoon			Half-Day Afternoon		
Trip 9	Valle Crucis Community Park	1:00	Trip 29	Valle Crucis Community Park	1:00
Trip 10	Grandfather Mtn. Stewardship Fndn.	1:15	Trip 30	Grandfather Mtn. Stewardship Fndn.	1:15
Trip 11	Brookshire Park	1:00	Trip 31	Brookshire Park	1:00
Trip 12	Lewis Fork Overlook & Jefress Park	1:00	Trip 32	Lewis Fork Overlook & Jefress Park	1:00
Trip 13	Elk Valley Pres. & Banner Elk Mill Pond	1:15	Trip 33	Elk Valley Pres. & Banner Elk Mill Pond	1:15
Trip 14	Trout Lake & Bass Lake	1:00	Trip 34	Trout Lake & Bass Lake	1:00
Trip 15	Green Knob Trail	1:00	Trip 35	Green Knob Trail	1:00
Trip 16	Price Lake & Campground	1:00	Trip 36	Price Lake & Campground	1:00
Full Day – All Meeting Times A.M.			Full Day – All Meeting Times A.M.		
Trip 17	Grandfather Mountain	6:00	Trip 37	Grandfather Mountain	6:00
Trip 18	Blue Ridge Parkway North	6:00	Trip 38	Blue Ridge Parkway North	6:00
Trip 19	Blue Ridge Parkway South	6:00	Trip 39	Blue Ridge Parkway South	6:00
Trip 20	Price Lake & Green Knob Trail	6:00	Trip 40	Price Lake & Green Knob Trail	6:00
Trip 42	Boone Fork Loop & Surrounding Area	6:00	Trip 43	Boone Fork Loop & Surrounding Area	6:00

Sunday, April 30

Half-day Morning

- Trip 41** Rarity Roundup!
- Trip 48** Blue Ridge Parkway South

CBC Spring 2023 Banner Elk Registration Form
Registration Begins Saturday, March 25, @ 2pm.
Register online for Best Availability of Field Trips at
www.carolinabirdclub.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Meeting Registration (Member) _____ x \$35 = \$ _____

Meeting Registration (Non-Member) _____ x \$40 = \$ _____

Buffet Dinner (A Vegetarian dish is on the buffet line)
 _____ x \$40 = \$ _____

Total Enclosed = \$ _____

Field Trip Sign-Up	A.M. 1st/2nd Choice	P.M. 1st/2nd Choice	All Day 1st/2nd Choice
Friday	/	/	/
Saturday	/	/	/

To pre-register for Field Trips, place the trip number(s) in the boxes to the right of the days.

Meeting registration at the door costs \$45.

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send to:

CBC, 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst, NC 28374

Club policy requires all field trip participants to comply with the field trip leader's assessment and requests concerning the physical ability of each participant to make or complete the trip.

I will release and discharge (and will not make a claim against) the Carolina Bird Club for injury, death, or property damage arising from my participation at this meeting and/or Club field trips. This release of liability is entered into on behalf of all members of my family, including all minors accompanying me. I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of any such minors and that I am over 18 years of age.

Signature _____ Date _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Processing of mail-in registrations will not begin until online registration opens.

Cancellations will be refunded if received by 6pm April 16.

Cancel by contacting the Headquarters Secretary at hq@carolinabirdclub.org.

A Carolina Young Birder visits Arizona for Camp Chirichua

By Max Ramey

Let me start out by saying this, my experience at Camp Chirichua was absolutely amazing and it was easily the most fun I have ever had in the seventeen years of my life. From the amazing birds to the great laughs, every second I spent in Arizona was unforgettable.

When I was traveling to the airport for my flight to Arizona, I had no idea what an unforgettable experience I was about to have. I knew it was likely to be a wonderful experience, but I was undeniably nervous. What would the other people be like? What would the leaders be like? As I boarded the plane these worries, mostly, faded into excitement. Once I arrived at the Tucson Airport and headed to the meeting place at the airport and met some of the campers and the camp leader, Willy Hutcheson, all my fears were instantly forgotten. We all got along great and had a lot in common! We were immediately immersed in conversation.

We soon left the airport for Madera Canyon, the first of many “Sky Island” mountain ranges we’d be visiting. It was an amazing experience to drive from the low desert cactus and scrub through high desert scrub, all the way up to pine oak forest! I had gone through some dramatic habitat changes in a few hours while driving before, but nothing like this! As we went up the mountain I was filled with a sense of awe. The mountain was a towering stone form, and it was dotted with pines and oaks – it was breathtaking.

Our first stop for birds was at Santa Rita Lodge to check out the feeders. I don’t know what I expected, but it was far better than I could have imagined! We were almost immediately greeted by five species of hummingbirds: Rivoli’s, Costa’s, Calliope, Black-chinned, and dozens of Broad-billed. Seeing them all together around the feeders so close was awesome! I had never experienced anything like it before. We also had Arizona Woodpecker, Mexican Jay, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, and wonderful looks at an adult male Hepatic Tanager. We reluctantly left the feeders to continue our drive to the Upper Canyon Trails. Here we hiked up the trail slowly and were able to enjoy the flora and fauna along the way. As we were enjoying this hike, someone up the trail yelled out “Trogon!!” We obviously all scrambled up the trail quickly and made it just in time to see our first, and only, Elegant Trogon of the trip. What a bird it was! Although it didn’t stay long, we still had ample time to enjoy this amazing species.



The author, Max Ramey is at left.

On our second day, we spent some time in the awe-inspiring Saguaro “forest” at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. Besides the absolutely striking landscape of the Saguaro Cactus dominated park, we were able to get quite a few good birds. The highlights here were Rufous-winged Sparrow, very friendly Cactus Wrens, Gilded Flicker, Pyrrhuloxia, Hooded Oriole, and our first Gambel’s Quails of the trip. After this we made our way to the Santa Catalina mountains, where we would be spending the next few days. On our first

afternoon there, we got some great birds like Mexican Whip-poor-will and Yellow-eyed Junco.

On our first morning in the Santa Catalinas, we had what was in my opinion the most significant bird of the trip. I was awoken by a harsh whisper uttered by our camp leader, Willy. Before I could even open my eyes, I heard it again, more clearly this time, "Pine Flycatcher!!" I jumped out of my tent and immediately heard the song of the Pine Fly. I walked over to Willy and, low and behold, there it was! Although the looks were backlit, as the sun wasn't up yet, we could barely contain our excitement! We had to be quiet because there were other people still sleeping in the campground, but we all danced happy jigs and fist bumped. This bird was the second North American record of the species and had been present in the area for some time. As the summer had gone on, it had been increasingly difficult to find, so we had really lucked out on this. Later that day we also had Red-faced Warbler, Greater Pewee, Olive Warbler, Sierra Madre Red Crossbill, Elf Owl, and Northern Pygmy Owl just to name a few.

After our stay in the Santa Catalinas, we headed to the Chiricauhas, making a few desert stops along the way. We stayed at Cave Creek Ranch for four days, and those days, as others told me they would be, were my favorites of the trip. I was blown away by how wonderful it was! There was a magnificent view of the red and orange rock face of the mountain watching over the canyon, an unbelievably clear water way, Cave Creek, behind the cabins, and a small pond in the center of the ranch, chocked full of rare dragonflies and amphibians. This place was so much better than I could have imagined!

On our first full day we spent most of our time in the lower portions of the Chiricahua Mountains. We snagged quite a few good birds including multiple Blue-throated Mountain Gems, a White-eared Hummingbird, and both Western and Whiskered Screech Owl.

The next day we made our way into New Mexico to bird in the desert and wrapped back around into Portal, AZ. We got some really cool species in the desert including Crissal Thrasher, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Cassin's Sparrow, Bendire's Thrasher, and Scaled Quail. Once we got back to Portal, we managed to find both Thick-billed Kingbird and Northern-beardless Tyrannulet. We spent the very end of the day watching some feeders and got a Lucifer and Violet-crowned (my 500th species) Hummingbird!

On our last day in the Chiricahuas we headed up to the higher portions of the mountains, scoring some southern AZ classics like Mexican Chickadee and Gray Hawk. Although Steller's Jay was not the highlight of the day, one individual certainly made a memorable move by pooping on my camera while we were eating lunch!

The next day we left for Sierra Vista. We had a lot of fun in the few days we stayed in Sierra Vista and had a few good birds in the Huachuca Mountains. The best of which were Short-tailed Hawk, Hermit Warbler, Canyon Wren, Buff-bellied Flycatcher and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. We also had some unforgettable experiences, most notably being stuck in a pizza restaurant after a powerful and unexpected monsoon hit and the power went out. Watching it rain sideways while the roads flooded was quite an experience for this North Carolina resident! We also saw a Banded Rock Rattlesnake, which was a runner up for unexpected!

Our last big stop was Sierra Vista, where we spent a few days. Our highlights while in that area were Green Kingfisher, Rose-throated Becard, and Tropical Kingbird. We also got to see the famous Patagonia Picnic Table! Our last day of birding was spent driving back to Tucson, and along that route, we stopped at Box Canyon. As soon as we got there, we were immediately greeted by our target, a singing Five-striped Sparrow, the fourth ABA rarity of the trip! It gave us some great looks before moving up the hill out of sight. After this we made the long journey to Tucson. We stopped

for an over summering Clark's Grebe before heading to the hotel near the airport. The last trip we would make was a short run over to a known Crested Caracara nest. Getting to see the pair majestically perched on a Saguaro with a dramatic sunset and monsoon in the background was a great conclusion to this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

The next day we all said our sorrowful goodbyes and parted ways to catch our flights back home. As my plane was taking off, I thought about this amazing experience. From making lifelong friends to seeing countless amazing birds, Camp Chiricahua was one of the best experiences of my life. I am so grateful to the Carolina Bird Club for providing me with a scholarship to attend the Chiricahua Youth Bird Camp. Thank You!

We had a total of 192 species of birds, 114 of which were lifers for me. We found over 1100 species of plants and animals in total, including 25 reptiles, 6 amphibians, about 550 insects, and 325 plants.



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



Carolina Bird Club
www.carolinabirdclub.org

Carolina Bird Club
1809 Lakepark Drive
Raleigh, NC 27612

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

Upcoming CBC Meetings

Spring Birding Weekend at Banner Elk NC – April 27-30, 2023
Fall Birding Weekend at Litchfield, SC – September 28th-October 1st, 2023

CBC Board Members

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stevepath1@aol.com

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