



Brown-headed Nuthatch  
by Doug Pratt

# Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin

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## Welcome to the Winter 2025 Issue of the Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin!

Winter is coming...but with it came Christmas Bird Count Season. For me, Christmas Bird Counts are a great time of getting out in the cold and walking a familiar territory in search of old friends. Generally, I count the same areas year over year and these places have become reminders of things that stay the same and things that change. My Chapel Hill Bird Count area includes the New Hope Bottomlands and I always look forward to seeing the Red-headed Woodpeckers and I always hope to see Rusty Blackbirds. There are many local Christmas Bird Counts and even if you are not an experienced birder or don't have a territory, you can join in the fun next year.

Membership in the Chapel Hill Bird Club is on a calendar year basis. Dues are a mere \$25. Our board recently decided to increase dues for the first time in over a decade. Our dues help run the club and pay for the rental of our meeting space at Binkley Baptist Church. Please do consider joining this year.

I hope to see you all at our January meeting or one of our bird walks soon.

Cheers,

Bo Howes  
CHBC President



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*The purpose of the Chapel Hill Bird Club is to provide engagement and educational opportunities for area birders of all experience levels. We offer interesting educational programs, local birding field trips, Christmas and spring bird counts, and connection to other members via a Facebook group. Members have access to like-minded people including experts who can answer your questions. Whether you watch birds in your yard or travel to the ends of the earth to chase rarities, our club offers something for you. We are a friendly group and welcome all to join us, especially new birders! Our members are mostly from the Research Triangle area of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, Cary, Pittsboro, and surrounding towns.*



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# Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin 2025 Membership Meetings

We have monthly meetings from September through May (except December) at Binkley Baptist Church at 1712 Willow Drive in Chapel Hill near University Mall on the fourth Monday of the month at 7:30pm. Come at 7:15 for light refreshments. Guests are welcome! We don't have a meeting in June, July, August, or December. We are holding hybrid meetings—in-person meetings with a Zoom option. As the night of the meeting approaches, please look for an announcement with the Zoom meeting link on the Chapel Hill Bird Club email list and Facebook page, Carolinabirds, New Hope Audubon Meetup, and the New Hope Bird Alliance website calendar.



**Our local eBird reviewer, Kent Fiala, has graciously agreed to help answer some of your eBird questions!** Submit your questions to [bohowes@gmail](mailto:bohowes@gmail.com) before the meeting and Kent will select one or two to address during our Membership Meetings!

**The deadline for submission is the day before each program meeting.**

## Winter/Spring 2025 Speakers

**January 27, 2025**

***David Anderson and Joe Donahue—Finding Birds in Panama***

Joe Donahue, David Anderson and Vern Bothwell spent 8 days in March 2024 at the Canopy Lodge in Panama. Daily field trips and observations at the Lodge tallied over 200 species. Feeding platforms at the Lodge made for some exciting sightings. And expert guides found a wonderful variety of birds in the surrounding regions.

David Anderson spent almost 40 years in the animal and conservation profession. Beginning as supervisor and interim director of the Duke Lemur Center, then general curator and associate director of the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, executive director of the San Francisco Zoo, director of Florida Audubon, strategic program director of the Bay Institute in San Francisco, and finally retiring to North



**David Anderson, Local Guide, Joe Donahue, Vern Bothwell**



Keel-Billed Toucans

Carolina, where he is chair of the Field Trips committee for New Hope Bird Alliance, and a drummer in a rock and roll band!

Joe Donahue is an avid birder. After getting a biology degree at Oklahoma State, he spent 20 years in the Army flying helicopters and airplanes "managing not to kill myself or anyone else." He then spent 2 years teaching high school in Tulsa, where he again "did not kill anyone but had serious thoughts on the subject." He returned to the aviation logistics field for the rest of his working days.

## February 24, 2025

### *Lynn Moseley--Leks, Sex, and the Buff-breasted Sandpiper*

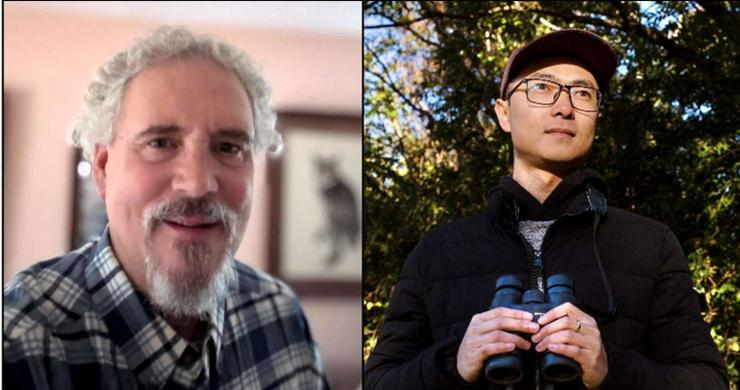
About 90% of bird species are socially monogamous, with a single male and female forming a pair bond and raising young. But about 100 species exhibit an unusual type of breeding behavior in which males in a small group defend individual territories in an area known as a lek. These territories are used exclusively for courtship displays and mating, and the males play no role in incubation or raising the young. This program will give examples of lekking species and explore why this behavior has evolved.



Lynn retired several years ago from Guilford College, where she was the Charles A. Dana Professor of Biology, and Chair of the Division of Natural Sciences and Math. Her Bachelor's degree in Biology is from the College of William and Mary (she took Ornithology from Dr. Byrd). She received her Ph.D in Zoology from UNC-Chapel Hill. At Guilford College Lynn taught courses in Ornithology, Animal Behavior, Vertebrate Zoology, and Outer Banks Ecology. Her research focused on Least Terns on the barrier islands of North Carolina, and later on Bald Eagles that nested in the Piedmont. Dr. Moseley has led many trips with students, alumni, and friends of Guilford College to observe wildlife in the American Southwest, East Africa, the Galapagos Islands, Nicaragua, Brazil, and Costa Rica.

**March 24, 2025**

***Bo Howes and Jin Bai—Habitat Management and Bird Population at Brumley North***



**Bo Howes**

**Jin Bai**

Brumley Forest Nature Preserve is a local popular birding hotspot in the Triangle, managed by the Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC). TLC has been working on land management activities aimed at improving the quality of habitat at Brumley North, including prescribed burns, removing invasive plants, planting native seeds and plugs, and doing bird-centered outreach events. Since the Fall of 2022, TLC and New Hope Bird Alliance have

conducted bird surveys to evaluate the effects of these habitat management activities on the bird population at Brumley N. Bo Howes and Jin Bai will co-present a talk presenting information on the management activities at Brumley N with Jin presenting bird population level and trends at Brumley N using data collected and compiled from the bird survey. In addition, Jin will also talk about the warbler index, which gives some unique insights into the birding hotspots with the highest number of warbler species seen during each migration season in the Triangle.

Bo Howes started as Conservation Project Manager for TLC in October 2008 and currently holds the position of Director of Land Protection and Stewardship West. With deep roots in the local community, Bo has successfully identified, initiated, and closed scores of land projects. He is a past president of the New Hope Audubon Society and a former member of the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Botanical Garden Foundation. He remains on the Botanical Garden Foundation Conservation Committee and is president of the Chapel Hill Bird Club.

Jin Bai received his Ph.D. in 2024 in the Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology program at NCSU and studies the drivers of urban bird diversity. He has extensive experience designing, coordinating, and assisting citizen science projects in the Triangle area, including organizing the Triangle Bird Count and bird-window collision monitoring. Jin is the Community Science Committee Chair and a board member of New Hope Bird Alliance.

**April 28, 2025**

***Robert Driver—Evolution and Functional Characterization of Olfactory Receptors in Birds***



Photo by Ichie Ojima

Vertebrates detect odor molecules with olfactory receptors (ORs), a gene family expressed in the olfactory epithelium. Among species, OR diversity is associated with reliance on smell, with some mammals exceeding 2,000 OR genes. Birds are the most speciose class of terrestrial vertebrates, inhabiting nearly all land environments and with diverse social structures and foraging strategies, yet were long thought to make limited use of olfactory signals. Recent behavioral work in birds has shown important roles for olfaction in foraging and species recognition, among other behaviors. Contributing to this surge of interest in avian olfaction, our recent work has shown that birds have hundreds more OR genes in their genomes than previously realized.

Dr. Driver received his B.S. in Biology from Muhlenberg College in 2009 and his M.S. degree in Biology in 2017 from Villanova University. In 2022, Robert received his PhD in Biology from East Carolina University. Robert is currently an NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Biology in the Department of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology at Duke University, in the lab of Dr. Hiroaki Matsunami, where he researches bird olfactory receptors and bird sense of smell.

**May 19, 2025**

***Bradley Scholten—Assessing the spread of antibiotic resistant Salmonella and E. coli in songbirds and at birdfeeders***



Bradley will talk about his research which focuses on understanding

the spread of antibiotic resistant bacteria in songbirds, specifically looking at Salmonella and E. coli – two pathogens that can cause epidemics in both humans and birds. Currently, he is looking at potential sources for where songbirds

acquire these bacteria. Ultimately, he hopes his research will contribute to solutions for limiting the spread of antibiotic resistance and zoonotic diseases.



Bradley is a fifth year PhD student in the Biology program at North Carolina State University, advised by Drs. Roland Kays and Martha Burford Reiskind. He is a 2020 Genetics and Genomics Scholar and a 2024 Global One Health Fellow. Before starting his PhD, Bradley received his BS in Biology at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he studied schistosome parasites in common mergansers at inland lakes in Northern Michigan, and also researched how drone flying affects behaviors and stress physiology in tree swallows.

Visit our website at <https://chbc.carolinanature.com> for information about our 2025 speakers and for a link to our archive of past Zoom meetings.



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# Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin 2025 FIELD TRIPS

The Chapel Hill Bird Club will lead bird outings/field trips about twice a month during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> weekends of each month. Our field trips are open to all.

Details of field trips will be emailed to all members via the CHBC listserv, posted on our website at <https://chbc.carolinanature.com/birdwalks/> and on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/chapelhillbirdclub>. Thank you to the New Hope Bird Alliance for posting information about our outings on their calendar <https://newhopebirdalliance.org/calendar/> too!

Contact Jim Capel at [jim.capel@mindspring.com](mailto:jim.capel@mindspring.com) with questions about our field trips or to volunteer to lead a future outing for the Club.

## Share Your Field Trip Photos!

If you take photos on our field trips, we'd love to see them and share them in a future newsletter! Submit your photos (up to 5 per field trip) here: <https://forms.gle/zpRue7mjiw7C8bGKCA>



**Above: Mason Farm, December 8, 2024**  
**Leader: Bo Howes**  
**Below: Brown Creeper from field trip**  
**Both photos courtesy of Bo Howes**



**Above: Road Waterfowl Impoundment**  
**November 17, 2024; Leader: Jim Capel**  
**Below: Brown Thrasher from field trip**  
**Both photos courtesy of Ross McKinney**





**Above: Mason Farm, December 8, 2024**  
**Leader: Bo Howes**  
*Photos courtesy of Kelly Mieszkalski*



**Above: New Hope Bottomlands, January 4, 2025**  
**Leader: Bo Howes**  
**33 species including abundant Red-headed Woodpeckers, several Fox Sparrows and this accommodating Hermit Thrush testing out the astroturf field!**  
*Photos courtesy of Bo Howes*



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# Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin 2025 Membership Update

## Renew/Join Today!

You are invited to renew your membership or join the Chapel Hill Bird Club for calendar year 2025!

Dues are now \$25 per calendar year for individuals and families (and you can pay for two years at a time), and still just \$10 for students. Dues received during any part of the year will only be credited for that calendar year—so **renew/join early at our membership and donations page** at <https://chbc.carolinanature.com/dues>! You can pay by Paypal, Venmo or check.

If you have a question about the status of your membership, feel free to email me at [dolohodgson@gmail.com](mailto:dolohodgson@gmail.com).

My best,

Do Hodgson  
Treasurer, CHBC



Above (L-R): Membership speaker series meetings: Madi Chudzik presents her research on migratory bird night calls. Ross McKinney shares his New Zealand birding experience.

Left: Mason Farm field trip, December 8, 2024

Photos courtesy of Kelly Mieszkalski



# Chapel Hill Bird Club Bulletin 2024/2025 Officers

## Elected Officers

**President:** Bo Howes ([bohowes@gmail.com](mailto:bohowes@gmail.com))

**Vice-presidents:** Carolyn McAllaster, Donna Wilder

**Treasurer:** Dorothy (Do) Hodgson

**Co-Secretaries:** Mia Burroughs, Roger Shaw



Bo Howes



Carolyn McAllaster



Donna Wilder



Do Hodgson



Mia Burroughs



Roger Shaw

## Appointed Officers

**Bird Count Supervisor/Compiler:** Will Cook

**Field Trip Chairman:** Jim Capel

**Bulletin Managing Editor:** Kelly Mieszkalski ([kellymieszkalski@gmail.com](mailto:kellymieszkalski@gmail.com))

**Webmaster:** Will Cook



Will Cook



Jim Capel



Kelly Mieszkalski