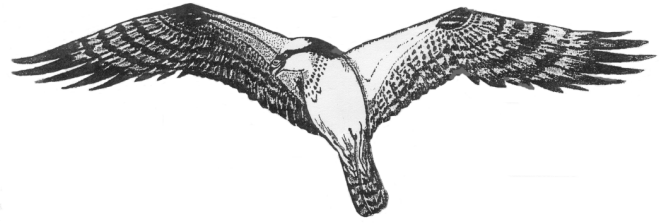


# Lower Neuse Bird Club



Volume 24, No. 4

LNBC Newsletter

December 2015

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## **LNBC HOLIDAY PARTY: Sunday, December 6, 2015, 5:00 pm until ???**

Olwen & Bill Jarvis invite LNBC members and spouses (or significant others) to celebrate the holiday season at their home, 5620 Gondolier Dr in Fairfield Harbour. Olwen and Bill are providing the main dishes and several desserts. Bring a dish to share... salad, veggie, appetizer, cheese, nuts, dips or dessert. A small selection of beer and wine will be available, but more wine is always good, or anything stronger that you may like. Directions to their home are at the end of the newsletter.

**Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 5, 2016 at 6:30 pm**

**NOTE: There is no regular meeting of the LNBC in December.**

**SPECIAL NOTE: Our January meeting will begin at 6:30 pm with refreshments offered prior to the beginning of the program.**

**Location:** Garber United Methodist Church on Country Club Road in Trent Woods, Room 123 on the first floor of the Ministry Center, across the road from the main church. Parking and entrance are in the rear of the building.

**Program Speaker:** Sara Schweitzer, PhD, Waterbird Investigations and Management Project Leader for the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, will talk with us about shorebirds and the upcoming Waterbird Society Annual Meeting to be held here in New Bern in September 2016. See [www.waterbirds.org](http://www.waterbirds.org).

**Refreshments:** Tammy Smith will be providing refreshments.

## **Lower Neuse Bird Club Officers**

Bob Gould, <i>President</i> .....	288-4615
Jim Oldham, <i>Vice-President</i> .....	571-7560
Mike Brooks, <i>Secretary</i> .....	649-1200
Christine Root, <i>Treasurer</i> .....	745-4488
Carol Oldham, <i>Newsletter Editor</i> .....	876-1620
Susan McCrocklin, <i>Refreshments Captain</i> .....	288-5043
Bob Holmes, <i>Field Trips</i> .....	633-3003
Al Gamache, <i>Field Trips</i> .....	675-8376

## **Membership News**

A separate attachment to this newsletter contains an updated listing of our current members. If your name is highlighted in red on this list, it means we have not yet received your membership dues. Please be sure to get your dues in as soon as possible.

Membership dues are \$15 per person and cover the program year from September 2015 through May 2016. Our treasurer, Christine Root, will continue to collect dues at regular meetings. You may also send your dues directly to Chris at 651 Quail Road, Merritt, NC 28556. Checks should be made payable to LNBC.

## **In Memoriam**

### **Jim O'Donnell 9/7/1950 - 11/10/2015**

Jim O'Donnell was an avid birder who was a friend of many of ours. He was born in Philadelphia, joined and retired from the United States Marine Corp. (including a tour in Vietnam) and later moved to Richlands, NC. He then worked most of the remainder of his life for the Stanadyne Corp.

About 1995, Jim developed lymphoma. I thought that our friendship would be interrupted fairly soon thereafter – not so. In spite of multiple courses of chemotherapy during the following years, he maintained an unbelievably upbeat attitude. If one were to remember a single characteristic of his, it would be his smile. One never knew when he was experiencing a low time, of which there were many.

Jim participated in our local Christmas Bird Count regularly, covering the Catfish Lake Impoundments and certain Brice's Creek areas. From Richlands, he would have to arise about 3:30 am in order to get there by daylight.

I once said, "Jim, you don't really have to be there before daylight."

He replied, "Bob, it's fun hearing the Screech Owls, but just being there and seeing the sunrise from that place is so beautiful, so wonderful. It's the best part of my day."

So that was Jim O'Donnell – reliable, bright, sensitive, uncomplaining.

Several of our LNBC members attended the visitation on Sunday, the 15<sup>th</sup> of November. We were immediately struck by a display of comradeship when we saw a row of veterans on the front steps, each standing at "parade rest," flag in hand, for hours. Inside there was an impressive warmth and conviviality, as well as sorrow, among family and friends.

*Submitted by Bob Holmes*

## **First-Saturday Birding Trips 2015-2016**

Mark your calendars with the following dates for this season's bird walks. Most trips end by noon and do not require much walking. Remember to bring your binoculars, scopes, field guides, insect repellent, raingear, snacks and water.

- December 5 Lilliput Pond and other areas around New Bern – ducks
- January 3 Spring Creek & Aurora – A Sunday Afternoon Trip
- February 6 Mattamuskeet
- March 12 North River Preserve with John Fussell
- April 2 Croatan - Millis Road. Looking for Bachman Sparrow.
- May 7 Camp Brinson
- June 4 North River Preserve with John Fussell + Fort Macon

Unless otherwise announced, all trips depart from the parking lot of the BridgePointe Hotel at 7am sharp. Carpools can be arranged as we meet up. The planned destination may be changed at the last minute if a special sighting or different trip gives us a better opportunity for birding. Information will be updated with each newsletter.

## **Extra Trips for Spring 2016**

- **Spring Mountain Trip** – May 2016 – Dates to be determined.
- **Howell Woods** near Goldsboro – Sometime in May – Dates to be determined.

## **Other Birding Events Of Interest**

- The **Winter CBC Meeting** will be in Litchfield, SC, February 5-6, 2016
- Waterbird Society Annual Meeting & 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration will be held here in New Bern in September 2016

## **Minutes From November 2015**

In a well attended meeting, President Bob Gould welcomed over 35 members and guests to the last LNBC meeting of calendar year 2015. Bob discussed the upcoming field trips. Although there is no December meeting, the trips to Lilliput Pond and Spring Creek are scheduled for December 5th and January 3rd, respectively. Refer to the First Saturday Birding Trips section of this newsletter for additional details. The next regularly scheduled club meeting is January 5th, 2016.

The LNBC Holiday Party, hosted by Olwen and Bill Jarvis, is the evening of December 6th. *Details are in the LNBC Holiday Party section, with directions at the end of the newsletter.*

In its October 27th edition, the Sun Journal recognized Olwen Jarvis as an Unsung Hero for her volunteer activities and ceaseless efforts to better our community. The club applauds the Sun Journal's selection. Congratulations, Olwen!

The Christmas Bird Counts are just around the corner. The New Bern, Pamlico County, and Morehead City counts will be December 14th, 15th, and 20th, respectively.

Jim Oldham thanked those who attended the shows presented by Master Falconer, Chip Gentry, on October 24th at the Wild Birds Unlimited store. I attended the afternoon presentation and found Chip to be exceptionally knowledgeable about the sport of falconry, physiology of birds of prey, and his understanding of why birds of prey are important to the environment.

The program for this meeting was an overview of the Spring Mountain Trips presented by Christine Root. Chris attended the two most recent trips and took notes and photographs of the club's experiences. In the most recent trip from Fletcher Park near Asheville to the Valle Crucis Park near Boone, the club spotted 19 warblers and 101 total species in the course of 3 days and 114 miles. The most notable species were a Scarlet Tanager and Cerulean Warbler at Bull Gap on the Parkway, a Black and White Warbler at Craggy Gardens, a Blackburnian Warbler near Mount Mitchell, a Ruffed Grouse in the Linville Falls area, Canada and Chestnut-sided Warblers at Trout Lake, and Least and Willow Flycatchers along with a Northern Waterthrush at the Valle Crucis Park. The pictures, bird calls, and stories made for an entertaining meeting.

Jim Oldham is building a web site for the LNBC. He demonstrated a prototype and encouraged us to test it and provide feedback to him. The URL for the web site is [lowerneusebirdclub.com](http://lowerneusebirdclub.com).

After the meeting adjourned, there was a small planning session for the members going to Pea Island on November 11-12th.

*Submitted by Mike Brooks, Secretary*

## **06 November 2015 / Simmons Street Wetlands**

Our visit to these wetlands produced a total of 40 species, a very nice count for this rather small area. Actually, when we bird this place we are looking for a much shorter list. Specifically, a list of *marsh bird specialties*, the King Rail, the Virginia Rail, and the Sora.

These three species are such skulkers of the reed beds, getting these three is rather much a matter of *birding by ear*. Fortunately we got all three. In fact, the "keek" note of the Sora was heard from a number of different locations, suggesting multiple Sora Rails.

Leaving the 'invisibles' or the 'no-see-'ems', we now go to a list of marsh birds that are more likely to be seen: Marsh Wren, Wood Duck, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Snipe. We got the wren and the duck, but struck out on the warbler and the snipe.

Then there's the list of the highly improbable: the Black-crowned Night Heron, the American Bittern, and the Sedge Wren. We didn't get any of these, but all three occasionally are to be found here.

Well, that's five specialty species; what of the remaining 35, making the total of 40. Here's a quick list:

Great Blue Heron	Com. Grackle	E. Phoebe
D.C. Cormorant	No. Flicker	Tufted Titmouse
Turkey Vulture	Mourning Dove	Song Sparrow
American Crow	Brown Thrasher	Tree Swallow
Osprey	Blue Jay	Swamp Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Killdeer	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Mourning Dove	Carolina Wren
Cooper's Hawk	American Robin	American Goldfinch
Pileated Woodpecker	Red-bellied Woodpecker	House Wren
Fish Crow	Red-winged Blackbird	Carolina Chickadee
Pied-billed Grebe	Euro. Starling	Brown-headed Nuthatch
Belted Kingfisher	Eastern Bluebird	

The above list is clearly not in taxonomic order. It is somewhat arranged from largest bird to smallest bird. In any case, we had a very good showing of birders for this bird walk, fourteen maybe fifteen in all. A lot better than the 2.5 birders we had for the two Glenburnie Quarry Bird Walks looking for those confusing fall warblers. Thanks to all!

*Submitted by Al Gamache*

## **11 & 12 November 2015 / The Annual Pea Island & OBX Bird Trip**

As we were nearing the end of our Pea Island & OBX Bird Trip I posed the following question to some birders nearby.

"Well, what do we think was our *bird of the trip*?"

This question was uncomfortably met by a rather extended length of silence.

"You mean to say that this was a bird trip that did not produce any *birds or bird of the trip*?" I continued in a hesitant sort of way.

Eventually, Bob Gould offered up the **Lesser Black-backed Gull** as a candidate, but then quickly withdrew that nomination as he was the only one to have seen that bird. It seems that when we all were checking in at the Comfort Inn, we were later to gather in room 408, Bob Gould's room, for our snack and wine happy hour. But when Bob first opened the door to his room, what to his wondering eyes should appear but a Lesser Black-backed Gull perched on the railing of his balcony, complete with all the requisite field marks. Good Golly Miss Molly!! However, by the time anyone else arrived at the room the bird had flown and was long gone.

The next nomination was the **Double-crested Cormorant**. True enough, there were thousands upon thousands of tiny black specks flowing through the distant sky, wave after wave after wave. I'll admit the numbers were very impressive, but I drew a

line in the sand, I'm not going to allow a Double-crested Cormorant nomination. And that's that!

This year was nothing like last year when we had a long list of outstanding birds. The consensus top three were the **Brant, Ross's Goose, & Eurasian Wigeon**. Followed closely by Great Cormorant, Anhinga, American Bittern, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, Black Scoters, and Surf Scoters, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Merlin, and on and on. None of which we had this year.

It was just one of those years when you just don't get much. I mean this year we had our lowest count of total birds, our lowest count of waterfowl, and our lowest count of outstanding birds. Strange talk began to break out amongst our group, talk about *climate change & global warming*, but those conversations were quickly quelled. There really wasn't much we could do except eat our sandwiches, limp back home, and think positively of our upcoming bird trip, which will be 'Lilliput to the Neuse.'

With the waterfowl numbers being so skimpy out at the OBX, I went over to Lilliput a couple of days later to check things out. Unbelievable! Nothing, absolutely nothing on the water! Not even a Grebe. That's a real negative Good Golly Miss Molly!! Last year, by the 12th of November pretty much all the ducks were in place at Lilliput, even the Common Gallinule. We're just waitin' for the cold to push them there ducks down.

Still there were sweet moments on our Pea Island Trip: lots of American Black Duck (a bird that I never get in my more regular haunts), simply gorgeous and close-up views of many No. Harriers, wonderfully close-up overhead flights of Snow Geese (with a few Blue Geese mixed in), a flotilla of Am. Avocets and a flight of fourteen American White Pelicans gliding beautifully over North Pond, and especially, not often mentioned but never to be overlooked, the comfortable comradery of fellow birders. My thanks to all.

*Submitted by Al Gamache*

## **21 November / Bear Viewing Walk at the Pocosin Lakes , Pungo Unit**

Why would I comment on a bear walk when we are a Bird Club? Well the reason is when birders are out and about for any reason, they have to bird as well! However, I will address the bears first. A group of around 15 people led by Mike Campbell, Regional Education Specialist with NC Wildlife Resources Commission walked muddy roads to stand and watch bears wander into the cornfields for breakfast! We saw between 24 and 30 bears, male, female and females with cubs. Whilst watching, Mike gave interesting talks sharing information regarding these beautiful creatures. Mike is equally passionate about birds. We saw many V formations of Tundra Swans heading for the lakes. Other birds seen included Coots, Widgeon, Northern Harriers, Marsh Wren, Red- Shouldered Hawk, Kestrels, TV's and possibly a Merlin. Comments were made regarding the low numbers and lack of variety of ducks seen at this time. We all greatly appreciated Mike's efforts on our behalf.....even if it did require us to start out at 4.30 **AM!!**

*Submitted by Olwen Jarvis*

## **Directions To Olwen & Bill Jarvis's Home**

5620 Gondolier Drive, Fairfield Harbour (252-637-7748)

### **From Route 55 East:**

1. At the **Handy Mart** traffic light, ~2 miles east of the Neuse River Bridge on NC 55, turn onto **Broad Creek Road**.
2. Continue ~**6 miles**. Go past the firehouse of Fairfield Harbour on the left.
3. Turn **right between the fountains and flagpoles onto Cassowary Lane**.
4. Stop at the guardhouse; tell the guards you are guests of the Jarvis's for the Bird Club party.
5. Proceed straight ahead a very short distance to a 4-way stop.
6. Take a right onto **Caracara Drive**.
7. At the 4<sup>th</sup> left, turn left onto **Pelican Drive**.
8. Continue to 4-way stop. GO STRAIGHT!
9. Turn left onto **Trade Winds Road** (this becomes **Gondolier Drive**).
10. Continue on to **Gondolier Drive**. # 5620 is on the right.
11. Park in the driveway or along the shoulder of the road – NOT on the grass in the yard.