

# Lower Neuse Bird Club

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## Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> Bird Walk – Mattamuskeet NWR & Pungo Lake

by Les Coble

Our popular yearly trip to Mattamuskeet NWR, with the afternoon extension to Pungo Lake, will be on Saturday, Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>. We will meet at the rest stop on Rt. 17 just before the Chocowinity exit, **7:00 AM**. Bring a lunch if you plan to be with the club all day. There are no facilities near any birding stop.

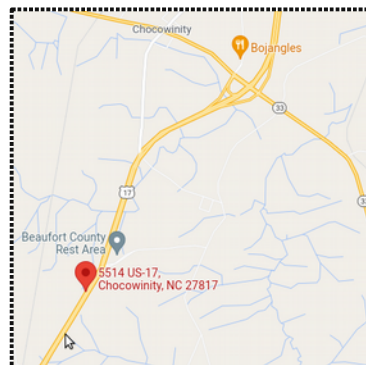
The birding stops available are endless. We will be viewing eBird for recently seen out-of-season and out-of-territory birds in the area to help plan the day! And, you never know what we will find!



*Tundra Swans at Pungo Lake*

*Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017*

©Michael Cheves



Address for GPS Directions:  
5514 US-17, Chocowinity, NC  
[Click to open in Google Maps](#)



*New Feeder Visitor!*  
*Hermit Thrush*  
*Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022*  
©Michael Cheves

## Monthly Meeting Postponed

Due to multiple factors including CDC recommendations for the *Omicron* variant of COVID-19, the decision has been made to cancel the Monthly Meeting for February. The March Meeting remains scheduled as usual; however, please remember to check your e-mails for updates. Any members who need to pay annual dues for the 2021-2022 Program Year can mail a payment to our treasurer at the following address:

*Christine Stoughton Root*  
*458 Country Club Drive West*  
*Arapahoe, NC 28510*

Dues are \$15 per person. Checks should be made out to **Lower Neuse Bird Club**. Again, please check your emails for updates on the meeting schedule. Thank you for your patience, and we hope to see each other again soon!

## Lower Neuse Bird Club

### New Bern Area Bird Walk – Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

by Ronnie Hewlette

#### Birding Calendar Dec 2021-Jan. 2022

Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>: Lake  
Mattamuskeet NWR, Lake  
Phelps, Pungo Lake (all day  
trip)

March 5<sup>th</sup>: Ft. Macon State  
Park

April 13<sup>th</sup>: Spring Creek or  
TBD

April 30<sup>th</sup>: Goose Creek SP  
(Friday walk)

May 7<sup>th</sup>: Bear Grass VOA  
(Henslow's Sparrow site)

May 11<sup>th</sup> (mid-week): Camp  
Brinson (Black-throated  
Green Warbler site)

May 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>: Warbler  
Road, Virginia (Overnight)

June 5<sup>th</sup>: North River  
Wetlands Preserve  
(Dickcissel site)

The Lower Neuse Bird Club gathered at Lawson Creek Park in New Bern, NC on a clear but COLD Saturday morning to visit several sites in and around New Bern, searching for birds that we might encounter but specifically looking for Orange-crowned Warblers, Wilson's Snipe, and waterfowl on the river. During the morning the group of eleven hardy Birders stopped at seven locations. Later in the day after the morning group broke up, a few club members continued birding into the afternoon with a visit to the Causeway at the Quarry, adding more birds to our day's count. The winds were at times a bit brisk but we had sunny skies and temps that started out around 28° and gradually moved up to near 40°, a real heat wave!

At Lawson Creek Park, we parked near the restrooms and walked the boardwalk loop that parallels the creek for a short distance then turns South along the marsh, returning to the paved road. Along the way Wade was searching for an Orange-crowned Warbler, playing it's call on his phone app, as we moved along. During the Christmas Bird Count in mid-December, two Orange-crowned Warblers reported in this area.

Shortly after we accessed the boardwalk, where it provides turn-out access to the creek, a Peregrine Falcon flashed in from seemingly nowhere, just over the trees along the creek, chasing one of the many gulls that were about. It was in and out and then moved on, but close enough to make one of the gulls give out a shriek in alarm and to give us a glimpse of its form.

Moving off the boardwalk onto a dirt trail, we approached a thick shrubby area with scattered low trees to the background. Several sparrows flushed and we began trying to sort out what was there. We found Song Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, along with two Gray Catbirds, a Brown Thrasher, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers and our first Orange-crowned Warbler. This is getting better all the time! The Orange-crowned Warbler was first sighted (briefly) in a juniper and then with persistence, it was tracked down, as it moved from tree to tree. Finally, I think everyone got a good look and some pictures of this warbler of interest.

Moving out to the road we walked toward the boat ramp, continuing to see gulls (Ring-bills and Herring) passing over and kettling out over the river. A couple of Red-winged Blackbirds were sighted but no large flocks were in the marsh grass. We walked over to Jack's Island to check out the cover along the edge of the open area. More Sparrows, Mockingbirds, a couple of Great Blue Herons, Eastern Bluebirds on the picnic tables, and a large flock of double-crested Cormorants out over the river added to our growing list of species. As we left this area and walked on toward the boardwalk that goes out into the marsh, a Carolina Wren sang its goodbye to us.

Approaching the Boardwalk we spotted three Orange-crowned Warblers, moving in and out of the trees on the roadside. That makes this a "Four Orange-crowned Warbler Day" at this one location. Wow, how unexpected is that!

Continued on Page #3

## New Bern Area Bird Walk – Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

by Ronnie Hewlette, continued from Page #2

Out on the boardwalk we tried calling a Virginia Rail, to no avail. However, we had a Marsh Wren respond to a call, with a brief glimpse of this bird before it retired back into the marsh. As we returned to our vehicles, I commented that we had not seen an Osprey for the morning and as we drove out of the parking area, an Osprey flew right over us. Add that one to the list!

What a great first stop of the day – we spent almost two hours at Lawson Creek Park. We now headed over to Lilliput Pond with a brief stop at the Bridgepoint Motel waterfront, looking for a Lesser Black-backed Gull. This proved to be unsuccessful, so after about 5 minutes we moved on to Lilliput Pond in search of waterfowl.

This pond has in the past held significant numbers of waterfowl but in recent years the numbers have been minimal. This could be due to the milder winters of recent years, or the feeding opportunities have been reduced in the lake. We found a small raft of ducks out on the lake, mostly American Wigeons. Not much else to write home about.....

Leaving here, we drove back along Perrytown Road to the pond behind Merchant's Grocery. The brush has been cleared along the pond and the swampy area to the north has dried up this winter, so the density of birds seems to have been diminished. Still, this was a productive area with sightings of our 5th Orange-crowned Warbler for the day, a House Wren, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, a lone, female Ring-necked Duck, and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, among others.

Time is getting away from us as we dash over to Marion Road, near the New Bern Airport, in search of Savannah Sparrows, Meadowlarks and raptors. This is an open, grassy-area with cattle grazing on the far side, and the airport runway in the background. At this stop we located at least four Red-tailed Hawks, soaring together very high up, in the distance, two American Kestrels, sparrows (Song & Savannah), Meadowlarks, Bluebirds, and 20+ Turkey Vultures on the ground and American Crows were spotted, looking back toward the cattle barns. When was the last time you saw four Red-tailed Hawks together? Nice find!

Next stop was at the Airport retention pond just off Williams Road, to look for the Wilson Snipe with a quick drive-by along Aviation Drive, to see if the Loggerhead Shrike could be located. The Shrike was a no-show, but the retention pond yielded six Wilson's Snipe, a Greater Yellowlegs, six Hooded Mergansers, six Killdeer, and a Great Egret. A Belted Kingfisher flushed and flew away as we approached. OK, another target bird was found!

Last stop was at Dick and Sally Rowe's house in River Bluffs subdivision. From their elevated deck we were afforded great looks at the Neuse River. Today, however, the duck hunters have been out on the water near here and the ducks have moved farther out. We were able to see great rafts of scaup (on the water and in flight), a few Ruddy Ducks and some Bufflehead, along with gulls, pelicans, and other birds at their feeders. Dick provided his famous gingerbread and cider and that was a real treat on this cold day! Thanks for the hospitality!



*Blue-Gray  
Gnatcatcher  
Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon*



*House Wren  
Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon*

## Lower Neuse Bird Club

### New Bern Area Bird Walk – Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

by Ronnie Hewlette, continued from Page #3

From here, a subset of the group continued over to the Martin Marietta Quarry for an afternoon look for additional birds. This added about 15 species to the day's list of birds. Most notable, was a Wood Stork (flyover at sundown), a Merlin, Redhead Ducks, a Palm Warbler and another Orange-crowned Warbler (that makes six for the day).

The total count for the day was 69. Not bad for a cold North Carolina day, in January!

#### Note from Les:

It is uncommon to get a *lutescens* subspecies Orange-crowned Warbler as our first one of 5 Orange-crowned today. The others were the *celata* subspecies as it is the common one seen here. There is a picture of both of them in this link. (<https://ebird.org/pnw/news/orange-crowned-warblers-oreothlypis-celata-in-the-pacific-northwest/>). You will likely recall it did not have the bigger, dark eye line we saw in the second bird found by Cap. Our *lutescens* was even brighter as it was in the sun. So, add it's unusual occurrence here and it helps to note the great sighting we had.



Orange-crowned Warbler (*lutescens* subspecies)  
©Mike Creedon

*Notice the brighter yellow, lack of gray hood, less prominent eye ring.*



Orange-crowned Warbler (*celata* subspecies)  
©Mike Creedon

*Note the duller yellow, gray hood, more prominent eye ring and dark eye line.*

# LNBC Checklist – New Bern Area, Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Compiled by Ronnie Hewlette

No.	Species	No.	Species	No.	Species
01.	American Wigeon	24.	Great Blue Heron	47.	House Wren
02.	Mallard	25.	Great Egret	48.	Marsh Wren
03.	Redhead	26.	Turkey Vulture	49.	Carolina Wren
04.	Ring-necked Duck	27.	Osprey	50.	European Starling
05.	Lesser Scaup	28.	Bald Eagle	51.	Gray Catbird
06.	Bufflehead	29.	Red-tailed Hawk	52.	Brown Thrasher
07.	Hooded Merganser	30.	Belted Kingfisher	53.	Northern Mockingbird
08.	Ruddy Duck	31.	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	54.	Eastern Bluebird
09.	Pied-billed Grebe	32.	Red-bellied Woodpecker	55.	American Robin
10.	Horned Grebe	33.	Northern Flicker	56.	House Finch
11.	Rock Pigeon	34.	American Kestrel	57.	Chipping Sparrow
12.	Mourning Dove	35.	Merlin	58.	White-throated Sparrow
13.	American Coot	36.	Peregrine Falcon	59.	Savannah Sparrow
14.	Killdeer	37.	Blue Jay	60.	Song Sparrow
15.	Wilson's Snipe	38.	American Crow	61.	Swamp Sparrow
16.	Greater Yellowlegs	39.	Fish Crow	62.	Eastern Towhee
17.	Ring-billed Gull	40.	Carolina Chickadee	63.	Eastern Meadowlark
18.	Herring Gull	41.	Tufted Titmouse	64.	Red-winged Blackbird
19.	Great Black-backed Gull	42.	Tree Swallow	65.	Orange-crowned Warbler
20.	Forster's Tern	43.	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	66.	Common Yellowthroat
21.	Wood Stork	44.	White-breasted Nuthatch	67.	Palm Warbler
22.	Double-crested Cormorant	45.	Brown-headed Nuthatch	68.	Yellow-rumped Warbler
23.	Brown Pelican	46.	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	69.	Northern Cardinal



Swamp Sparrow  
Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon

## Lower Neuse Bird Club

### New Bern 2021 Christmas Bird Count Overview

*by Wade Fuller*

This year's count was held on Thursday, December 16th under almost ideal circumstances-- no rain, light winds and temps that topped out in the low 70's. An excellent group of 32 participants was able to get very good coverage within our count circle. This resulted in our highest species count since 2000-- we tallied 120 species which is well above average for this century. We had 19,000 individual birds. Last year's count tallied 110 species which was the previous high count since 2000.

Our species and numbers of individuals averaged higher back in the 90's when the Martin-Marietta Quarry was in full operation. Back in the mid-90's we had 3 counts that topped 120 species with the all-time high of 127 species back in 1994.

Highlights this year included the addition of Brant to our list. Rich and Susan Boyd had the great fortune of seeing a small flock of this small goose fly by right in front of them when they surveyed the Neuse River from Johnson Point Road. Also, several High Counts of individuals were reported this year: Black Vulture, Red-Shouldered Hawk, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, American Coot, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and both House and Carolina Wren. We tied former High Counts for Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker and Bald Eagle. Because of the warm fall that continued through our count, we had a large group of 1100+ estimated individuals of staging Laughing Gulls that hung around through Count Day. Other interesting birds that have not been found on this CBC in many years was a Greater Yellowlegs that was identified by their "Tu-Tu-Tu" call heard by Al Gamache near the boat ramp at Glenburnie Park. In addition, Les Coble's group found a Tri-colored Heron at Martin-Marietta Park.

All in all it was a great day to be outside and to be a part of a memorable Christmas Bird Count.

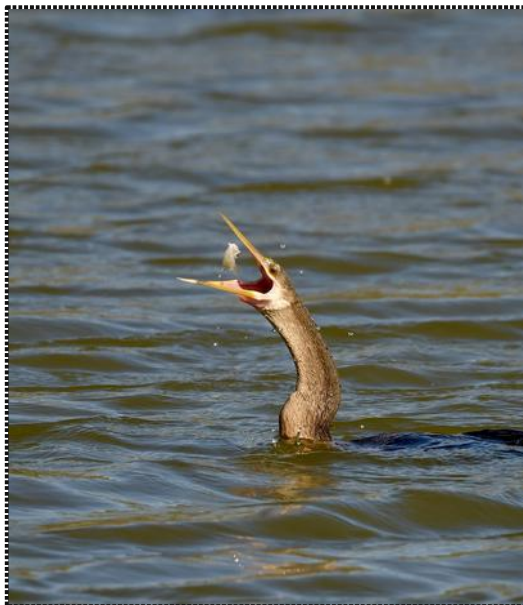
### Pamlico 2021 Christmas Count Party Photo

*Submitted by Liz Lathrop*



## LNBC Photo Gallery

Submissions welcome! Send your bird, wildlife, and nature photograph(s) to [lowerneusebirdclub@gmail.com](mailto:lowerneusebirdclub@gmail.com)  
Full credit will be given to the photographer



Anhinga at Rio Grande Valley,  
Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon



LNBC Members at Lawson Creek Park  
Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon



White-tailed Kite  
Rio Grande Valley, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon



Ladder-backed Woodpecker  
Rio Grande Valley, Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon

# Lower Neuse Bird Club

## LNBC Photo Gallery



*Crimson-collared Grosbeak*  
Rio Grande Valley, Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon



*Pyrrhuloxia*  
Rio Grande Valley, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon



*Altamira Oriole*  
Rio Grande Valley, Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon



*Greater Roadrunner*  
Big Bend NP, Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
©Mike Creedon