

Lower Neuse Bird Club

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LNBC Meeting Minutes for September 13, 2022

by Jenni Ford

Wade Fuller opened the first monthly meeting of the 2022/2023 season. 23 individuals including several new members were in attendance at Garber UM Church.

All of the officers have agreed to continue in their positions for another year.

Members were reminded that annual membership dues of \$15 are due now (with exceptions for those who recently joined.) Members should pay Treasurer Christine Root by cash or check at monthly meetings or by mail.

Sally Rowe provided refreshments and circulated a signup sheet for upcoming meetings. Sally expressed her wish to hand over the role of Refreshments Captain. Anyone who would like to fill this position is asked to let Sally or one of the co-Presidents know.

Christine informed members of Birdcast.info a website that provides migration information. Users can enter their choice of location (their state, their home, their county, or other desired location) and the app will tell what is flying in the succeeding couple of days, thus providing clues as to what might be migrating through at any given time.

Christine has offered to arrive a half hour early prior to the monthly meetings (i.e. at 6:00) to provide eBird instruction/guidance or to answer questions about the app. Those interested, should let her know in advance of the meeting, as it doesn't make sense for her to come early if no one is there to partake.

Recent observations of notable birds in the area were discussed. Still active sightings: Wood Storks, Sandhill Cranes, Great Shearwaters, and Black Terns have been spotted locally. Many birders from across the state have seen Swallowtail Kites in Pender County and a Neotropic Cormorant at Martin Marietta Park.

- Sept. 17th – East Shackleford Banks
- Sept. TBD – Martin Marietta Park (aka “The Quarry”) – This bonus trip will be announced by email a few days ahead; based on best migration patterns
- Oct. 1st – Martin Marietta Park – **canceled** due to Hurricane Ian forecasts (*will be rescheduled, likely the following week*)
- Oct. 11th – Monthly Meeting (Rescheduled to **second** Tuesday) at 6:30 PM, Garber United Methodist Church in New Bern. Featured speaker Travis Kornegay of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission.

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Red-breasted Nuthatch
Mount Mitchell SP, Sept. 23,
2022

©Michael Cheves

Lower Neuse Bird Club

LNBC Meeting Minutes for September 13, 2022

by Jenni Ford, continued from Front Page

Attendees were reminded to check email and newsletters often.

Several upcoming walks are dependent upon the vagaries of weather and/or tides. Additionally, the October meeting date will be pushed to October 11th as that date will better accommodate our speaker's schedule.

Program: Unfortunately, our scheduled speaker Travis Kornegay was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. Fortunately, on short notice Les Coble was able to pull together his presentation originally scheduled for the October meeting. Travis is now scheduled to be the featured speaker at the October meeting on Tuesday, October 11th.

Grand Tetons, WY: History, Geology, and Birding. Several years ago, Les traveled to Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming with his horseback riding group. He was able to fit in birding between his other activities to the tune of 110 species! He visited the Mormon Settlement which is an eBird HotSpot among many other beautiful and birdy spots. We learned about some of the impacts of the 1925 flood, local geology, and some of the non-birding hotspots. Les shared maps and photos of amazing mountainscapes, and photos of many of the Western birds that he was able to appreciate there from the Calliope Hummingbird – the smallest bird in North America – to Golden Eagle – a much larger bird.

LNBC Bird Walk – North River Preserve, Sept. 10, 2022

by Ronnie Hewlette

Whenever you go birding with a group, there is an opportunity for sharing, learning, honing of skills and techniques and an over-all good time. Throw into the mix a rainy day and there will be a diversity of bird lists and counts because we are not venturing far from our vehicles, but we still had a great time! That was what we had Saturday for the first Bird Walk of the 2022-23 Birding Season. It rained and rained, (off and on, thank goodness) making the grass wet and keeping the paths we traveled wet and muddy, so after the first stop, everyone had wet feet unless you were wearing rubber boots, of course.....

Twelve birders arrived at the North River Preserve at 7:30 AM. It was good to see everyone from previous bird walks and to meet new birders

for the first time. John Fussell was our guide for the day, and we all had high expectations, despite the anticipated rain!

As we drove into the Farm, a light sprinkle began and would continue, prompting us to don our rain gear for the first stop of the day on the south end of the wetland's levee/berm.

Lots of ducks flushed as our tires on the muddy path announced our arrival. Wood Ducks for sure, maybe a flock of Gadwalls, as Les spotted the white in their wings and under side, and a "bunch" of Blue-winged Teal got up and continued circling before finally leaving. Waterfowl in flight are such a challenge to identify and this skill best comes through practice, practice, practice and with guidance from the more experienced birders.

Tentative Calendar for 2022

Friday, September 23rd:
Martin Marietta Park (aka "The Quarry")

Saturday, October 1st:
First Saturday Bird Walk at Martin Marietta Park has been **canceled** due to Hurricane Ian forecasts. This walk will be rescheduled, likely for the following week. Please look for an email announcement.

Tuesday, October 11th at 7:00 PM: LNBC Monthly Meeting at Garber United Methodist Church
(Rescheduled to **second Tuesday** to accommodate our scheduled guest speaker Travis Kornegay (NC Wildlife Resources Commission) Please check your email. Arrive at 6:30 for refreshments/socializing.

November 1st at 7:00 PM:
LNBC Monthly Meeting

November 5th: Simmons Street Wetlands & Lawson Creek Park, New Bern (First Saturday Bird Walk)

December 3rd: Pamlico County/Oriental area (First Saturday Bird Walk)

December TBD: LNBC Holiday Party (no monthly meeting)



Rainy Start at North River

©Ronnie Hewlette, Sept. 10th, 2022

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LNBC Bird Walk – North River Preserve, Sept. 10th, 2022

by Ronnie Hewlette, continued from Page #2

There were four Greater Yellowlegs on the water-covered mudflats and a couple of Least Sandpipers briefly joined them. A well-camouflaged Great Blue Heron was spotted through an opening in the grass on the backside and a Glossy Ibis stood in contrast, against the marsh grass. We will see a few more Glossy's and a couple of White Ibis, later in the morning.

One lone Pied-billed Grebe, several Great Egrets and Little Blue Herons (White-immature) were identified. Before the day is over, we will see a few Snowy Egrets but they are generally out-numbered this year by the Little Blue Herons and Great Egrets.

Already, my shoes are WET and my socks are WET but it's not pouring-down rain (yet)! Heading North at the last high ground, John drove his car to the top but the rest of us elected to walk. It was so wet in the grass, I don't think there was a danger of disturbing fire-ants or snakes or even ticks but walking up and down the slope we needed to guard against slipping on the wet grass or mud.



Naturalist John Fussell leads the Lower Neuse Bird Club into the North River Wetlands Preserve
©Ronnie Hewlette, Sept. 10th, 2022

At this elevated point we spotted a tern, working over the open water. Upon closer interrogation we determined it was a Gull-billed Tern. Not long afterwards, a second Gull-billed Tern was seen. Gulls and ducks were seen in the distance, but it was time to move on.

Normally we drive along the brush line to the back of the property but today we headed back to the equipment center for a restroom break. However, upon arrival we found the door to the restroom was locked. This stop did provide some

adds to our checklist for the day. A Barn Swallow darted about and several swallows sitting on a powerline drew our attention. Rough-winged? Not likely. Tree Swallows, maybe. No, these we concluded were Purple Martins – we finally heard them!

Purple Martins migrate to South America for the winter, but before leaving, they gather to roost in groups of thousands in late summer. Such a fascinating roost of purple martins can usually be seen in July-August, at the William B. Umstead Memorial (“Old Manns Harbor”) Bridge, near Manteo, NC. The Purple Martins have a long journey each fall from their breeding grounds in the U.S, down, across the Gulf of Mexico, to the summery forests of Brazil. They travel up to 4-5 thousand miles in their journey.

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Lower Neuse Bird Club

LNBC Bird Walk – North River Preserve, Sept. 10th, 2022

by Ronnie Hewlette, continued from Page #3

As we are standing there looking at the Martins, a Wilson’s Snipe flies over – where did this guy come from? Some days you just get lucky! And with a good ear, John pointed out hearing Bobolinks flying overhead. I think I need more practice with that sound.

And the rain continues.....

Looking back down the road from this intersection we picked out a dozen Wild Turkeys in the distance.

Traveling to the north end of the property, we turned down the shrub line and traveled East for a short distance. John stopped where he heard what sounded like a Northern Waterthrush. Sure enough, a Northern Waterthrush hopped out on a limb in plain sight – but not for long.

It was moving around a lot, so John started calling. It re-appeared in another tree and then more birds appeared – several Common Yellowthroat Warblers (a couple of females, a First-YR Male, a mature Male), a couple of Yellow Warblers, a female American Redstart, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. It was amazing to have these birds essentially at eye-level, right in front of us.

Driving on down the path, we spotted a falcon in the top of a tree. We had seen an American Kestrel earlier in the morning and now we have a Merlin at close range. Both are “First of Season” sightings for most of us. The Merlin stayed around for a while; at one point flying off only to return to the same perch. We also picked up two more Northern Waterthrushes at this stop – unbelievable!

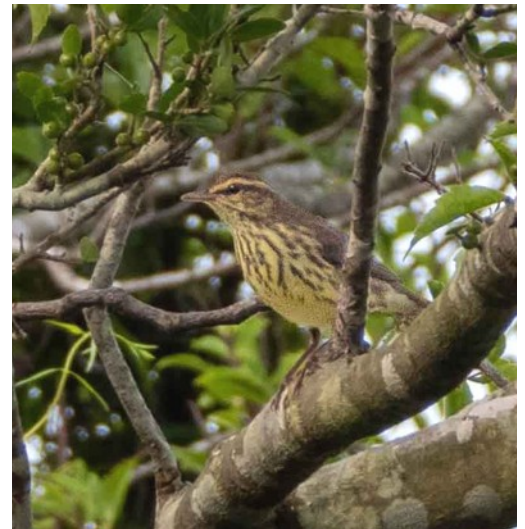
From here, we drove to the mound that overlooks Open Grounds Farm. This time everyone drove to the top! (It is still raining). From this vantage point we found several Blue Grosbeaks, both males and females, moving about. Baltimore Orioles were spotted, and one was so bright that it resembled a Yellow-breasted Chat for a moment, adding to the excitement of the moment.

Moving back in the general direction of the entrance, we made a couple of stops, looking (unsuccessfully) for a Black-bellied Whistling Duck that has been nesting in a Wood Duck box, Black-crowned Herons, Anhinga, and whatever else we can find.

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Merlin at North River Preserve
©Ronnie Hewlette, Sept. 10th, 2022



Northern Waterthrush at North River Wetlands
©H. Curtiss Merrick, Sept. 10th, 2022

LNBC Bird Walk – North River Wetlands, Sept. 10th, 2022

by Ronnie Hewlette, continued from Page #4

Our final stop was down a grassy spur road that dead-ended at a small, ponded area. Wood Ducks jumped when we first arrived and then some shorebirds got up, circled around, and returned to the wet area. These turned out to be mostly Least Sandpipers but included a handful of Semipalmated Plovers.

This brings our species count for the morning to 56. The rain seemed to be picking up, contrary to our expectations, so we headed to the entrance. This has been a trip to remember – birding in the rain!

-Ronnie Hewlette

No.	Species	No.	Species	No.	Species
01.	Wood Duck	20.	Little Blue Heron	39.	Carolina Wren
02.	Gadwall	21.	Tricolored Heron	40.	Bobolink
03.	Blue-winged Teal	22.	White Ibis	41.	Gray Catbird
04.	Northern Bobwhite	23.	Glossy Ibis	42.	Northern Mockingbird
05.	Wild Turkey	24.	Osprey	43.	Eastern Towhee
06.	Pied-billed Grebe	25.	Belted Kingfisher	44.	Baltimore Oriole
07.	Mourning Dove	26.	American Kestrel	45.	Red-winged Blackbird
08.	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	27.	Merlin	46.	Common Grackle
09.	Semipalmated Plover	28.	Eastern Kingbird	47.	Northern Waterthrush
10.	Killdeer	29.	White-eyed Vireo	48.	Black-and-white Warbler
11.	Least Sandpiper	30.	Red-eyed Vireo	49.	Common Yellowthroat
12.	Wilson's Snipe	31.	Blue Jay	50.	American Redstart
13.	Greater Yellowlegs	32.	Tufted Titmouse	51.	Yellow Warbler
14.	Willet	33.	American Crow	52.	Prairie Warbler
15.	Laughing Gull	34.	crow sp.	53.	Summer Tanager
16.	Gull-billed Tern	35.	Purple Martin	54.	Northern Cardinal
17.	Great Blue Heron	36.	Barn Swallow	55.	Blue Grosbeak
18.	Great Egret	37.	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	56.	Indigo Bunting
19.	Snowy Egret	38.	Brown-headed Nuthatch		

Lower Neuse Bird Club

LNBC Bird Walk – East Shackelford Banks, Sept. 17, 2022

by Ronnie Hewlette

A year ago, almost to the day, the Lower Neuse Bird Club made the trip by ferry over to East Shackelford Banks. This morning, eight birders arrived at the Harkers Island Ferry to catch the first 20-minute ferry ride to the beach, hoping to find a returning Bar-tailed Godwit, a Long-billed Curlew and the Reddish Egret, among others. Low tide was at 5:20 am, so we have planned to go in on the rising tide to catch the birds as they concentrate on the flats.

We were all able to make it on the first ferry, even those that were wait-listed. The skies were partly cloudy to sunny with a North wind at 7-8 mph. The message-board at the ferry terminal stated the high temps would be in the upper 70's with winds out of the NE at 17, with gusts to 26 mph. At least it's not raining!

First sightings were Brown Pelicans, gulls and terns on our ferry-ride over. The Sandwich Tern seems to be the tern that is least seen in our everyday birding, so it was of special interest to see them on the sand bar as we approached the beach and to then hear them in flight far above our heads. [Cornell Lab All About Birds](#) website says breeding adults are pale gray above, white below, with a black crest and a black bill with yellow tip. The outer primaries of the wing are dark gray, and the legs are dark. Nonbreeding adults have a white forehead and little or no crest. Juveniles lack the yellow tip to the bill (some have yellowish bill), legs and feet usually dark but sometimes yellowish.

The Yellow-tipped bill is thrilling to see for birders that make that ID recognition and see this field mark for the first time. The yellow-tipped, black bill really sets them apart!

The flats show the exposed oyster beds, and several wild horses are scattered across the flats. One of them found it necessary to wade the creek and to pass by us, within about ten feet. One of the benefits of coming to Shack!

Scanning the marsh grass, we spotted a couple of Northern Harriers gliding low over the grass. We will see more – these are brown, indicating they are females. The white rump is diagnostic – this is a favorite bird of many. This sighting may have been a “First of Season” for several of us.

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*Sandwich Terns
East Shackelford Banks
©Ronnie Hewlette, Sept.
17th, 2022*



*LNBC at East Shackelford Banks
©Ronnie Hewlette, Sept. 17th, 2022*

LNBC Bird Walk – East Shackelford, Sept. 17th, 2022

by Ronnie Hewlette, Continued from Page #6

The birds are at a distance and seeing so many individuals makes it confusing to lock in on just one, but our expectations are high with so many birds around us. As we moved along the edge of the creek looking for birds of interest, we counted at least 45 Marbled Godwits. Lots of Piping Plovers & Black-bellied Plovers, Sanderlings, along with at least one Long-billed Curlew!

Les identified a Bar-tailed Godwit, which was one of the target birds for the day. It was at a distance but after some time he concluded that it was similar to the Marbled Godwits but he was able to pick out the features that set it apart.

We had a Clapper Rail erupt from cover within a few feet of us and fly over the creek to the grass on the far side. It never called. I guess we just got too close to it, and it bolted. Surprised us!!

Moving farther along the edge of the mud flat we picked up Great Egrets, a few Snowy Egrets, lots more American Oystercatchers and a “Dancing” Reddish Egret. Love seeing this bird.....

According to Cornell Lab, “Reddish Egrets chase fish energetically through shallow saltwater environments. They pursue fish on foot or swoop at them in flight, create shadows with their wings both to startle and to attract them, and herd them toward land. This behavior makes them distinctive even at great distances”.

Lots more Marbled Godwits; impressive birds in flight! We estimated there were at least 65 individuals within sight on the flats. A pair of Black-crowned Night Herons were seen at a distance, flying over the marsh as we were looking for the American Avocet that was spotted about as far out as you could imagine. On the way back we located a Peregrine Falcon and a Kestrel in a distant treetop.

The tide was moving in and based on our location, the group decided to return to the ferry pickup to avoid getting any wetter than was necessary. Fabulous trip, although a bit breezy by mid-day. We identified 41 species and had a great time, enjoying our morning on the Banks!

-Ronnie Hewlette



Piping Plover at East Shackelford Banks
©Ronnie Hewlette, Sept. 17th, 2022



Wild Horse at East Shackelford Banks
©Ronnie Hewlette, Sept. 17th, 2022

Lower Neuse Bird Club

LNBC Bird Walk – East Shackelford Banks, Sept. 17th Checklist

Compiled by Ronnie Hewlette

#	Species	#	Species	#	Species
01.	Mourning Dove	15.	Short-billed/Long-billed Dowitcher	29.	Great Egret
02.	Clapper Rail	16.	Dunlin	30.	Little Blue Heron
03.	American Avocet	17.	Greater Yellowlegs	31.	Snowy Egret
04.	American Oystercatcher	18.	Willet	32.	Tricolored Heron
05.	Black-bellied Plover	19.	Willet (Western)	33.	Reddish Egret
06.	Semipalmated Plover	20.	Laughing Gull	34.	Black-crowned Night-heron
07.	Piping Plover	21.	Herring Gull	35.	White Ibis
08.	Killdeer	22.	Caspian Tern	36.	Turkey Vulture
09.	Long-billed Curlew	23.	Forster's Tern	37.	Osprey
10.	Bar-tailed Godwit	24.	Royal Tern	38.	Northern Harrier
11.	Marbled Godwit	25.	Sandwich Tern	39.	American Kestrel
12.	Ruddy Turnstone	26.	Black Skimmer	40.	Peregrine Falcon
13.	Sanderling	27.	Double-crested Cormorant	41.	Boat-tailed Grackle
14.	Least Sandpiper	28.	Brown Pelican		



LNBC Members braving the coastal terrain at East Shackelford Banks

©Ronnie Hewlette
Sept. 17th, 2022

Public Surveys on NC National Forests to Begin October 1, 2022

Announcement courtesy of US Forest Service

The National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) surveys, which take place every five years, will be conducted on the National Forests in North Carolina starting October 1, 2022 and will run through September 30, 2023. These surveys will be conducted by a team from the University of Tennessee.

The information gathered provides National Forest managers with an estimate of how many visitors recreate on the National Forests, what activities they engage in, how satisfied they were with their visit, and the economic impact of recreation visitation to local communities. This information will help forest managers determine where to focus their efforts and how recreation facilities can be improved to ensure all forest visitors have a clean, safe, and high-quality experience.

These voluntary surveys will be conducted in developed and dispersed recreation sites and along Forest Service roads. The surveyors will be out in all types of weather conditions, wearing bright vests and be near a sign that says, "Traffic Survey Ahead". They gather basic visitor information, and all responses are confidential; no names are captured in the surveys. Interviews last about 10 minutes and include questions such as where visitors recreated on the Forest, how far they traveled, their party size, and their satisfaction with the recreation facilities and services provided. About a third of the visitors will be asked to complete a confidential survey on recreation spending during their trip. More information can be found at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/nvum>



Visitors to North Carolina's National Forests will see this sign anywhere a Visitor Use survey is being conducted.

LNBC Photo Gallery

All submissions welcome. Send your bird and nature photographs to lowerneusebirdclub@gmail.com. Full credit will be given to the photographer, and photographers will retain all rights to their work.



Clockwise from top left: Black-bellied Plover, wild horse at East Shackleford Banks, Semipalmated Plover, Long-billed Curlew
All photos ©Christine Stoughton-Root, East Shackleford Banks, Sept. 17, 2022

Welcome New Members

The LNBC is proud to welcome several new members who have recently joined. We are thrilled to see the following new faces at our meetings and Bird Walks:

- Beaufort, NC: Douglas Doubleday, Ann Doubleday
- Jacksonville, NC: Kimberly Blair
- Morehead City, NC: Jeff Mason, Kathryn Mason
- New Bern, NC: Kathryn Herne, Cheryl Michaels, Susan Perry
- Raleigh, NC: Zach Ambrose

Welcome all to the Lower Neuse Bird Club! Happy Birding!

