

February 2023
Volume 31
Issue 6



LOWER NEUSE BIRD CLUB

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LNBC Upcoming Events Schedule

Monthly Meeting Programs:

- ♦ February 7, 6:30 PM Birding SE Arizona – Ronnie Hewlette
- ♦ March 7, 6:30 PM Mike Creedon's trip to the Galapagos
- ♦ April 4, 6:30 PM Neuse Riverkeeper (Samantha Krop) Presentation
- ♦ May 2, 6:30 PM TBD

Meet & Greet 6:30 - 7:00 PM & Meeting Agenda begins at 7:00 PM

Location: Garber Methodist Church (Room 123)
4202 Country Club Drive, Trent Woods

First Saturday Bird Walks

- February 4 Mattamuskeet NWR & Pungo Lake
- March 4 Fort Macon SP/surrounding areas
- April 1 Patsy Pond/Cedar Point/Haywood Landing
- May 6 Beaufort County VOA
- June 3 North River Wetlands Preserve



Savannah Sparrow at Martin
Marietta Park
© Ronnie Hewlette

**Club Tee-shirts
Available for pickup at the
Feb 7th Meeting**



**\$20 each. Cash or Check
(Checks should be made out to
Lower Neuse Bird Club.)**

Additional Bonus Trips

- Additional Bonus Trips will be planned as opportunities arise.
- Notifications will be sent by email.

LNBC WEBSITE

www.lowerneusebirdclub.com

LNBC MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 3, 2023

Ronnie Hewlette opened the first meeting of the new calendar year at Garber Methodist Church. 21 members (including one new member) and guests were in attendance.

Members were reminded to make their \$15 dues payment to Treasurer Christine Root by cash or check if they have not already settled up.

Wade Fuller reported that LNBC t-shirts will be ordered after the end of the current meeting for those who have requested them.

Ronnie reminded attendees that LNBC is looking for a volunteer for the role of Refreshments Captain to coordinate the snack-providers for each meeting. Sally Rowe has filled the position for several years and noted that although it is not a huge time commitment, she has been less available since she and Dick have been traveling more. Members are asked to contact Sally at sdrowe106@yahoo.com or one of the co-Presidents to inquire about and support this effort.

Attendees shared the many recent sightings of bird species in the local area, including Pea Island and Wilmington. The reported sightings bode well for the next Saturday walk.

Upcoming walks/events - Emails with additional details will be provided in advance of walks:

- Saturday January 7th – Martin Marietta Park causeway
- Saturday February 4th – Annual trip to Mattamuskeet. This will probably be an all-day trip, though not everyone needs to remain with the group for the entire foray.
- Tuesday February 7th – regular monthly meeting - speaker TBA

Program: “Waterfowl ID Basics: Getting Your Ducks in a Row” was presented by Wade Fuller. This was a very thorough primer of so-called gamebirds, i.e. ducks, geese and swans.

Wade described major categories and described their basic body types (especially placement of legs). For individual species practical information on characteristics, plumages, behavior, and anticipated locations was provided. The most common species of the area were covered as well as some rarities that might be seen. We were treated to helpful hints and photos of birds as they appear floating on the water and flying over.

Our thanks go to Mike and Carol Creedon for providing refreshments for the meeting.

Submitted by Jenni Ford



E. Screech Owl ©
Ronnie Hewlette

Reminder:

Wake Up! -- Recently, a car was broken into as it was parked in the lot at Martin Marietta Park. Not that long ago, a car was broken into while parked at Latham-Whitehurst Park on Broad Creek Road. We, as Birders, often park in out-of-the-way places, so please be mindful of the risks and don't leave valuables exposed, inviting a break-in.

LOWER NEUSE BIRD CLUB

Martin Marietta Bird Walk– January 7, 2023



Martin Marietta Park © Ronnie Hewlette

The January Bird Walk has always been somewhat of a challenge to map out. We wanted to find local waterfowl, if possible, with an opportunity to spot other birds of interest along the way. We decided to go to the Quarry because this location has proven to have the most diversity, based on recent reports and other locations have been void of waterfowl this season.

As we gathered at the parking lot of Martin Marietta Park (formerly the Quarry), for our 1st-Saturday Bird Walk of 2023, we heard gun shots of duck hunters out in the Neuse River gunning for the ducks we hoped to see. It's going to be a great morning! The weatherman was calling for a cloudy sky, light winds and a cool 36°. As we were getting ready to get down to business, Les and I both heard a Greater Yellowlegs calling. We never did locate it but that's what we heard.....

We had thirteen birders in our group and as we gathered and began scanning for waterfowl on the impoundment, more-or-less to the west of the parking lot, Les was the first to spot a male, Red-breasted Merganser – a great find for this location. Everyone got an opportunity to take a look at this striking bird. This was a male, identified by its green head with a stringy-looking crest, neck band of white that cuts off dramatically at the green head and rusty-brown breast. Wow! While looking over the Coots, Grebes, Scaup and gulls on the water, a Redhead Duck was seen on the far side. Taking time to scope the gulls, most of which were Ring-billed Gulls, we picked out a couple of Laughing Gulls (smaller with dark gray back & upper-wings, black bills), several Herring Gulls (larger size and brown in color) and several young Great-black Backed Gulls (primarily identified by their larger size). This is what I call "working the crowd" – taking some time to look for the detailed field marks. Watch the birds move around and look at the colors and shapes that help you made the identification. That's the way to find the unexpected birds!

We saw lots of Coots and plenty of Pied-billed Grebes, along with a scattering of Ruddy Ducks and one Horned Grebe (we found 4 or 5 in total by the end of the morning). A few Canada Geese rounded out the list, as we began to move toward the Causeway. But we made one more important (unexpected) observation – Les spotted about five Greater Scaup! We all gathered around trying to confirm this identification. Wade pointed out some of the field marks: Rounded Head shape – yes, sometimes a brighter white / high contrasting sides on males – yes, and a white smudge on the brown cheek of the females – yes, all pointing to that of the Greater Scaup! What a great start to our morning!

Between the parking lot and where the causeway view opens to the water on both sides, we often find a mixture of birds. We had several Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Mockingbirds, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Orange-crowned Warblers (at least 4 or 5 by the time we finished our walk), Song Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows, a Common Yellowthroat, and a Palm Warbler. While checking out the raft of Lesser Scaup gathered just to the East of the causeway, we identified another Redhead, a couple of Canvasbacks, Ring-necked Ducks and two more Horned Grebes in the distance.

CANVASBACK



Canvasback © Michael Cheves

GREATER SCAUP



Greater Scaup © Michael Cheves

LESSER SCAUP



Lesser Scaup © Michael Creedon

BUFFLEHEAD



Bufflehead © Michael Creedon

NORTHERN SHOVELER



Northern Shoveler © Michael Cheves

Lower Neuse Bird Club Newsletter

In the background and above the raft of ducks we were entertained by Tree Swallows swooping and gliding over the water. A Bonaparte's Gull and a Forster's Tern joined the strings of gulls flying overhead to add to our list of 53 species at the Quarry this morning.

At the wooded marsh, just beyond the end of the Causeway we eased up to the edge and were able to spot a Mature Bald Eagle flying from its perch, another Great Egret got up (we had previously spotted four in a treetop), two pair of Hooded Mergansers and a couple of Wood Ducks. In the trees we had Yellow-rumps, Downy Woodpeckers, a Flicker, and another Eastern Phoebe. As we turned to return to our vehicles, a flock of Cedar Waxwings made a sudden appearance, flying overhead but never stopping for us to get a really good look.

Kevin located Savannah Sparrows in the grassy fields on our way back to the parking area and a Coopers Hawk showed up before we left. From the causeway a sub-adult Bald Eagle was seen across the impoundment, lifting off from the edge of the marsh grass and flying up into a tree. This would be Eagle #2 of three that we would see during our time at the Quarry. On our way out we heard a couple of Fish Crow to complete our list.

From here, a few of the group car-pooled over to "R"-Gardens, on the opposite side of Glenburnie Drive and just down the road, in search of the Anhinga that hangs out in this area. At our first stop, with a little bit of searching, we located the Anhinga. This is a large black waterbird with a long neck, that was perched in limbs hanging out over the water. It resembles the Cormorants we see in the area but this one was identified by its light-brown neck and head, a dagger bill, and a noticeably long tail that was easily seen when it ruffled its feathers as we watched.

This was a stellar birding trip with several outstanding "Finds". I have to put the Red-breasted Merganser at the top of the list as the "Bird of the Day" because it was so unexpected and so uncommonly seen here. But I have to say that this "Bird of the Day" is closely followed by the Greater Scaup, Canvasback, Redhead, Anhinga and the numerous, Orange-crowned Warblers. We went looking for waterfowl and we found seventeen species that fall into that category. What a day!

Martin Marietta Park (Quarry) is a gem of a place to visit, and it never disappoints!

- Ronnie Hewlette



PIED-BILLED GREBE



REDHEAD



RED-BREASTED MERGANSER



Go to **Page 6** to see the [Species List](#) for the [Martin Marietta Park Bird Walk](#)

Carolina Bird Clubs first Birding Weekend in Over 3 Years

CBC held its long-awaited Festival, finally, due to Covid, at the Outer Banks January 13-15. Member Les Coble had organized the event for last year, so he helped Susan Campbell by getting all trips out the hotel door and lead several trips over the weekend. The same speakers had been confirmed and he introduced them to the attendees.



Thursday evenings speaker was preceded by a loud Welcome and applause to and by all attendees, grateful for the triennial event to return. The enthusiasm was the start of a convivial 3 days. Thursday's speaker was Aimee Tomcho of NC Audubon presenting an interesting discussion (yes, many questions) on the status and research on the Golden-winged Warbler throughout its range. Radio trackers are now available that are dramatically changing the knowledge of the actions and movement of both males and females.

Friday's speaker was John Gerwin on the NC Museum of Natural Sciences. The presentation focused on birds throughout the Mid-Atlantic, in particular NC, that have territories separated by several hundred miles. The nesting "Wayne's" Black-throated Green Warbler, we see at Camp Brinson is one such bird, nesting here and in the Appalachian's. One of the ever-present issues facing researchers and birders is, "What is a Species?" That is but one factor in the lumping and splitting, now mostly splitting, of the birds around the globe. The hour presentation seemed to pass in a few minutes. Saturday, our Keynote Speaker, the affable Steve Shultz, gave us a rousing look at the Origin of Species from his trip to the Galapagos. Did you know the Mockingbird was the focus of the Origin vs the finches? In a few minutes Steve had everyone convinced they were as knowledgeable of the names of the Galapagos birds as the local guides. Flightless Cormorant, Galapagos Flamingo, Galapagos Hawk, Galapagos Penguin – you get the idea.

Weather was the only nuisance of the weekend. Cold and gales Friday, with Cold, sleet, snow, gales Saturday. Landbirding was exasperating. Yet 161 species were identified, including Glaucous and Iceland Gulls, Snow Buntings (seen in the snow), Cackling Goose, Ash-throated Flycatcher. These were overshadowed by the bears and Red Wolves at Alligator River NWR. The trips for rare species on Sunday morning went back to Alligator River for the mammal shows.

Banner Elk, NC will be the site of the Spring Birding Weekend, April 27-30. 5.5 hours from New Bern is a world of spring migrant and nesting warblers. Plan a trip with friends and enjoy the far western part of this diverse State.

Submitted by Les Coble



Ash-throated Flycatcher © CBC



Snow Bunting © CBC

MARTIN MARIETTA PARK BIRD WALK

Species List

January 7, 2023

No.	Species	No.	Species	No.	Species
1	Canada Goose	24	Forster's Tern	47	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
2	Wood Duck	25	Anhinga	48	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
3	Northern Shoveler	26	Double-crested Cormorant	49	House Wren
4	Gadwall	27	Great Blue Heron	50	Carolina Wren
5	Mallard	28	Great Egret	51	Gray Catbird
6	Canvasback	29	Black Vulture	52	Northern Mockingbird
7	Redhead	30	Turkey Vulture	53	Eastern Bluebird
8	Ring-necked Duck	31	Cooper's Hawk	54	American Robin
9	Greater Scaup	32	Bald Eagle	55	Cedar Waxwing
10	Lesser Scaup	33	Osprey	56	Chipping Sparrow
11	Bufflehead	34	Red-shouldered Hawk	57	White-throated Sparrow
12	Hooded Merganser	35	Belted Kingfisher	58	Savannah Sparrow
13	Red-breasted Merganser	36	Red-bellied Woodpecker	59	Song Sparrow
14	Ruddy Duck	37	Downy Woodpecker	60	Swamp Sparrow
15	Pied-billed Grebe	38	Pileated Woodpecker	61	Eastern Towhee
16	Horned Grebe	39	Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted)	62	Red-winged Blackbird
17	American Coot	40	Eastern Phoebe	63	Orange-crowned Warbler
18	Greater Yellowlegs	41	Blue Jay	64	Common Yellowthroat
19	Bonaparte's Gull	42	American Crow	65	Palm Warbler (Western)
20	Laughing Gull	43	Fish Crow	66	Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle)
21	Ring-billed Gull	44	Carolina Chickadee	67	Northern Cardinal
22	Herring Gull	45	Tufted Titmouse	68	
23	Great Black-backed Gull	46	Tree Swallow	69	

Feb. 4th Bird Walk – Mattamuskeet NWR & Pungo Lake

Our annual visit to Mattamuskeet NWR & Pungo Lake is considered to be one of the most rewarding 1st Saturday Bird Walks that we have. This is an opportunity to see Ducks, Swans, Snow Geese and possibly Sandhill Cranes, up close.

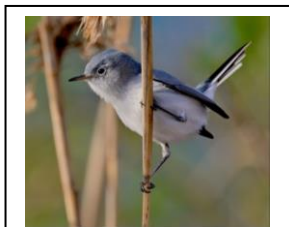
We will meet Saturday, February 4th at the rest stop on Rt. 17 just before the Chocowinity exit, and plan to depart around 7:00 AM, as we caravan from that location.

This will be a two-phased trip. Initially we will visit Lake Mattamuskeet and the near-by areas. Bring a lunch to enjoy around mid-day. In the afternoon we will travel over to Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, making stops along the way, as we target the arrival of the thousands of Snow Geese in the late afternoon. (The geese usually arrive around 4:30 – 5:00 pm). This is a spectacular experience, even for those that have seen it before. Hope you can join us!



Snow Geese © Ronnie Hewlette (2/8/20)

Photo Gallery



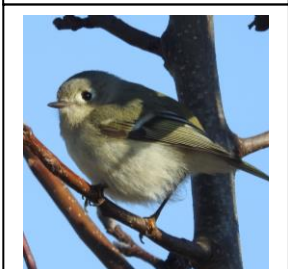
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher © Michael Creedon



Common Yellowthroat © Michael Cheves



Orange-crowned Warbler © Michael Cheves



Ruby-crowned Kinglet © Ronnie Hewlette



Great Snap!

Red-shouldered Hawk © Michael Cheves

Welcome New Members

The LNBC is proud to announce new members:



- Dana Miller** (Kinston, NC)
- Curt Pelton** (New Bern, NC)
- Mary Pelton** (New Bern, NC)
- Frances Smith** (New Bern, NC)
- Susan Stroud** (New Bern, NC)

Annual Membership

Program Year (Sept – May)
 Submit payment to our treasurer
 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.

Welcome to the Lower Neuse Bird Club!

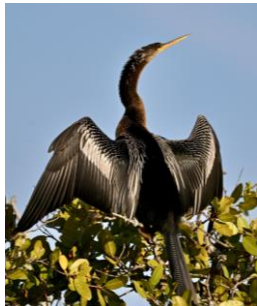
On the road with Captain Mike

(Merritt Island NWR) Titusville, FL (1/24/2023)

All photos © Michael Creedon



Painted Bunting



Anhinga



Clapper Rail



Wood Stork