

January 2023  
Volume 31  
Issue 5



LOWER NEUSE BIRD CLUB

## Club Officers

### Co-Presidents:

Les Coble

[sialia2016@gmail.com](mailto:sialia2016@gmail.com)

Ronnie Hewlette

[hewlette@suddenlink.net](mailto:hewlette@suddenlink.net)

Wade Fuller

[wade@fullersmusic.com](mailto:wade@fullersmusic.com)

Secretary: Jenni Ford

Treasurer:

Christine Stoughton Root  
252-269-6306

Newsletter Editor:

Ronnie Hewlette  
252-229-6380

Web Master:

Michael Cheves  
[lowerneusebirdclub@gmail.com](mailto:lowerneusebirdclub@gmail.com)

Refreshments Captain:

Sally Rowe 252-514-2822  
[sdrowe106@yahoo.com](mailto:sdrowe106@yahoo.com)

## LNBC Upcoming Events Schedule

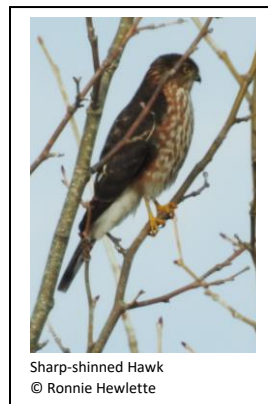
### Monthly Meetings

- ♦ January 3, 6:30 PM "Waterfowl Identification" by Wade Fuller \*\*
- ♦ February 7, 6:30 PM \_\_\_\_\_ TBD\*\*
- ♦ March 7, 6:30 PM \_\_\_\_\_ TBD\*\*
- ♦ April 4, 6:30 PM \_\_\_\_\_ TBD\*\*
- ♦ May 2, 6:30 PM \_\_\_\_\_ TBD\*\*

\*\*Address: Garber Methodist Church  
4202 Country Club Drive, Trent Woods (Rm 123)

### First Saturday Bird Walks

- January 7 Martin Marietta Park & other New Bern sites
- 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



Sharp-shinned Hawk  
© Ronnie Hewlette



### 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.



### Additional Bonus Trips

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

**LNBC WEBSITE**

[www.lowerneusebirdclub.com](http://www.lowerneusebirdclub.com)



# THANK YOU!

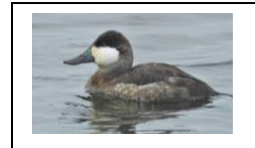
Heartfelt thanks to Olwen and Bill Jarvis for opening their home to the Lower Neuse Bird Club members and hosting our annual **Christmas Party** to celebrate the season.

With a respectable turnout of club members, spouses, and friends, it was a grand time for celebrating with old friends and making new friends, in a holiday setting.

We are grateful for all you do for the Lower Neuse Bird Club – Thanks!

## ***First Saturday Bird Walk (January 7) New Bern Area***

Meet at Martin Marietta Park (playground) at 7:30 AM



## **LOWER NEUSE BIRD CLUB**

### **Pamlico County Bird Walk– December 3, 2022**

Eleven birders showed up for the Lower Neuse Bird Club's December Bird Walk to Pamlico County. We had some Old-timers, as well as First-timers in our group – ready to see what a tour of Pamlico County could produce. Sheryl McNair and Diane Midness were our leaders for the day, as we assembled in the parking lot of the Pamlico County Library in Bayboro. Departing at 7:30 AM, we made the short drive over to **Joe Himbry Waterfront Park** on Hwy 304, situated near the headwaters of Bay River. Previous reports of a Marsh Wren and a leucistic Mockingbird at this site provided an incentive for us to take a good look at all aspects of the habitat that this park afforded – marshland, wooded thicket, creek side, boat docks & trawlers and open park grounds.



The weather was great for birding with light winds, temps in the 50's and overcast skies. We took our time here, identifying over 20 species, including lots of Ringbill Gulls, Red-winged Blackbirds, American Robins and Yellow-rumped Warblers. A couple of Tufted Titmouse were flitting about in the rigging of one of the commercial trawlers docked in this narrow waterway across from us. That was unexpected! Sapsuckers and Woodpeckers were identified, and the trees were loaded with Robins. Fish Crows, a bird that it seems is not so abundant this season of the year, were identified by their calls. Looking to the skies, as gulls passed over provided an opportunity to pick out several Tree Swallows as they flap and glide overhead. The marsh that is on the backside of the park provided Swamp and Song Sparrows, but these birds made quick appearances as

they popped up momentarily to look around before diving back into the marsh grass. Chickadees, Starlings, Carolina Wrens and a House Wren, a Gray Catbird and an Eastern Phoebe were listed to round out our list of birds for this location.

Our next stop was at the **Bayboro Water-treatment Ponds**, just up the road on Hwy 304. As we drove in, we spotted 2-3 Eastern Phoebe sitting on the fence beside the path and a Palm Warbler dropped down into the grass behind a cedar tree along the same fence.

We drove in along the fence as far as we could and stopped between the two ponds and parked. Making an effort to not startle the waterfowl, we eased up



the slope of the dike with our scopes and peered over the edge of the dikes. In the two ponds we found over 100 Northern Shovelers, Ruddy Ducks, Buffleheads, along with a single Muscovy Duck. The Muscovy Duck is considered to be a “Domestic Type” and it’s here every year. Is it a year-round resident? Maybe....



A single Yellowlegs flew in, quite loudly, bringing up the question – “Greater or Lesser”? Based on overall size, leg-length and to some degree, its call, the consensus was that it was a Greater Yellowlegs. Judging bill-length always frustrates me so I need to use other field marks and characteristics.

There seemed to be a continuous stream of black birds in the sky. Their number was estimated at 500 and others took it up to 700-800 or more. A lot of feathers, to say the least!

Our third stop was 20 minutes away, at the **River Dunes Fire Station retention pond**. This pond has attracted 50-plus species over the past several years. We can always expect to find Yellowlegs (sometimes, both Greater and Lesser), Ring-necked Ducks, Hooded Mergansers and Bufflehead in good numbers.

Looking back, there have been reports of American Wigeon, Lesser Scaup, Coot, Redheads, Gadwalls, Green-winged Teal, and Wood Ducks -- all in this man-made pond. This trip, however,



was a **FIRST** for finding a pair of **Canvasbacks**. In Coastal NC, sightings in recent years have been 1-5 birds at a location, with a few instances of 20-25 occasionally reported. Most of these sightings were in or near the Pea Island NWR. The Cornell Lab’s “All About Birds” site describes the Canvasback’s conservation status as follows: “*Canvasback populations have fluctuated widely since the 1950s. Low numbers in the 1980s put the Canvasback on species of*

*special concern lists, but numbers increased greatly in the 1990s. The North American Breeding Bird Survey suggests that the population has been stable from 1966 through 2015. In 2017, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimated the U.S. population at around 700,000 individuals. Partners in Flight estimated the global breeding population at 670,000. The species rates a 10 out of 20 on the Continental Concern Score, which means it is not on the Partners in Flight Watch List and is a species of low conservation concern. Fluctuations in numbers are likely due to wetland loss and to changes in water levels that reduce the number of available nest sites. The suggestion is that Canvasbacks did well in wet years and poorly in dry years. In the Prairie Provinces in Canada around 40% of original wetlands were lost between 1951 and 1981. In North and South Dakota 3.6 million acres of wetlands have been lost and another 3.6 million were lost in Minnesota.*



*Loss of wild celery, a primary food source, due to pollution, siltation, and eutrophication also made some areas useless for Canvasbacks; their migration routes and wintering sites changed during the last 40 years as a result.*

*Hunting may also contribute to fluctuations as harvest limits have changed over the last 3 decades. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages duck hunting and limits the number of individuals hunters can take every year based on population size. From 2012–2106, hunters took on average 114,495 Canvasback annually.”*

In a [National Park Service Biologist’s note](#) it is reported that nearly half of North America’s canvasbacks used to winter in the Chesapeake Bay region. That figure has since declined to about 20 percent due to a decline in bay grasses, their preferred food. However, canvasback populations appear to be slowly recovering due to better protection measures.

Cool Fact:

The canvasback gets part of its scientific name, valisineria, from the scientific name of wild celery, *Vallisneria americana*, its favorite food.

In addition to being rewarded by the somewhat uncommon sight of these Canvasbacks on the pond, we saw hundreds of Ring-necked Ducks and Bufflehead, and a handful of Hooded Mergansers (females). Two Greater Yellowlegs kept up a fairly loud and almost obnoxious chorus, flying from one end of the pond to the other while we were there.

Leaving here we made our way over to Oriental, stopping at the ***Oriental Recreation Park***, just outside of town. Our plan was to walk over to the Water-Treatment Pond, located behind the Park, hopeful of seeing a diversity of species not yet recorded. This has worked for us in the past, but this time, we encountered a number of birds in the parking lot of the park, before we got to the area around the ponds. One bird made sure we all saw it – a Blue-headed Vireo was spotted about mid-level in the trees at the end of the parking area. It was moving around quite a bit, but it came out of the foliage enough for us all to get good, unobscured looks. This vireo winters here and is strikingly colorful with a blue-gray head, thick white spectacles, grayish-olive back, yellowish sides, bold white wingbars, and a white throat and underside. Beautiful -- and one of my favorites!

When we approached the ponds, a couple of Great Blue Herons flew over as we watched a Great Egret hanging out around the ponds. An American Kestrel was spotted on top of a power pole, but our presence eventually made it unsettled, and it flew off to perch in top of a tree, away from the ponds. A couple of Song Sparrows were back and forth in the grasses along the pond edges as we encountered Carolina Chickadees, a Tufted Titmouse, and a couple of Ruby-crowned Kinglets. A Brown Thrasher was seen as we were leaving. The White-throated Sparrows which are usually found here, along with other sparrows, eluded us completely.

Returning to the parking lot, we found a Pine Warbler foraging on the ground, a couple of American Goldfinch, a single Chipping Sparrow, many, many Yellow rumped Warblers and Eastern Bluebirds and a few other species.

It was a great day to be outside and birding with friends!

-Ronnie Hewlette

## PAMLICO COUNTY BIRD WALK

### Species List

December 3, 2022

No.	Species	No.	Species	No.	Species
1	Canada Goose	19	Downy Woodpecker	37	European Starling
2	Muscovy Duck	20	Hairy Woodpecker	38	Gray Catbird
3	Northern Shoveler	21	Pileated Woodpecker	39	Brown Thrasher
4	Canvasback	22	Northern Flicker	40	Northern Mockingbird
5	Ring-necked Duck	23	American Kestrel	41	Eastern Bluebird
6	Bufflehead	24	Merlin	42	American Robin
7	Hooded Merganser	25	Eastern Phoebe	43	American Goldfinch
8	Ruddy Duck	26	Blue-headed Vireo	44	Dark-eyed Junco
9	Killdeer	27	Blue Jay	45	Chipping Sparrow
10	Greater Yellowlegs	28	American Crow	46	Song Sparrow
11	Laughing Gull	29	Fish Crow	47	Swamp Sparrow
12	Ring-billed Gull	30	Carolina Chickadee	48	Red-winged Blackbird
13	Great Blue Heron	31	Tufted Titmouse	49	Palm Warbler
14	Great Egret	32	Tree Swallow	50	Pine Warbler
15	Turkey Vulture	33	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	51	Yellow-rumped Warbler
16	Belted Kingfisher	34	Brown-headed Nuthatch	52	Northern Cardinal
17	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	35	House Wren		
18	Red-bellied Woodpecker	36	Carolina Wren		

### Exceptional bird sightings this month

*Christine Stoughton Root* had a **Ross's Goose** and **Snow Goose** show up in the lake at her house, near Arapahoe, NC.



Snow Goose © Christine Stoughton Root



Ross's Goose © Christine Stoughton Root

*Ronnie Hewlette* traveled to Wrightsville Beach to find a **Black-legged Kittiwake**, a **Manx Shearwater** and a **Parasitic Jaeger** at Johnnie Mercier's Pier. (All Life-bird List adds)



Black-legged Kittiwake © Ronnie Hewlette (2 photos)