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Issue 7



LOWER NEUSE BIRD CLUB

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LNBC Upcoming Events Schedule

Monthly Meeting Programs:

- ♦ 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 6 Easy Shorebirds to start your ID Foundation (Les Coble)

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

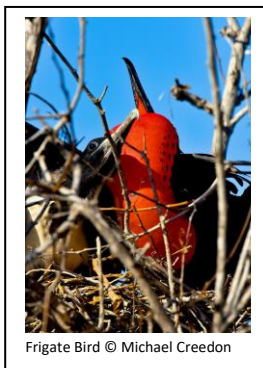
Location: Garber Methodist Church (Room 123)
4202 Country Club Drive, Trent Woods

First Saturday Bird Walks

- **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

A Galapagos Islands Adventure – March 7th

DON'T MISS THIS ONE!



Frigate Bird © Michael Creedon



Medium Ground Finch © Michael Creedon



Nazca Booby © Michael Creedon

LNBC WEBSITE

www.lowerneusebirdclub.com

LNBC MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 4, 2023

Wade Fuller opened the meeting at Garber Methodist Church. 25 participants (including several new members) were in attendance.

Wade had the Club's handsome new Tee-shirts with LNBC logo available for distribution. Those who ordered shirts can pay and pick them up at future meetings and forays.

Some attendees noted that they might not be receiving all emails. The Club is doing their best to include all contacts in each mailing, so everyone is encouraged to contact one of the Co-presidents and/or Treasurer if they seem to be missing some.

Attendees shared the many recent sightings of bird species in the local area. Current highlights included a Surf Scoter at Lawson Creek found by Tom Leith and eBird reports of Harlequin Duck(s) at Ft Macon and Atlantic Beach.

Carol Riegle announced the April 21-22 celebration of International Dark Sky Week put on by several partnering organizations including Crystal Coast Stargazers. Two days of celebration at Harkers Island and Cape Lookout include speakers, starlight cruises and more. Additional information can be found at ccstargazers.com, then choose "Crystal Coast Star Party 2023".

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

- Saturday March 4th – Fort Macon and environs. Participants can meet at Ft Macon parking lot at 7:45 am or Lawson Creek Park at 7:00 am to carpool. Watch for email for specifics.
- Tuesday March 7th – regular monthly meeting – presenter Mike Creedon – Galapagos trip

Mini-Lesson: Les Coble presented the elements of Peripheral Birding, that is, starting with the forest and not the trees.

Program: Ronnie entertained us with "Southeast Arizona Birding Adventure" recapping his trip to Tucson and surrounds with Kevin O'Kane from Apr 30-May 8, 2022. Ronnie recommends A Birder's Guide to Southeastern Arizona by Richard Cachor Taylor as an invaluable companion. Birding is excellent year-round in the area, but spring is best; people there definitely cater to birders. The men visited six different locations with radically different habitats – some dead dry, some lush (canyons), and some with significant changes in altitude. Ronnie shared his photos and anecdotes of many of their bird sightings including five rare birds and the Elegant Trogon that they chased for days. Both men added significant numbers to their life lists.

We express our appreciation to Nancy Stubbs for the refreshments she provided for the meeting.

Submitted by Jenni Ford

LOWER NEUSE BIRD CLUB

Mattamuskeet Bird Walk– February 4, 2023

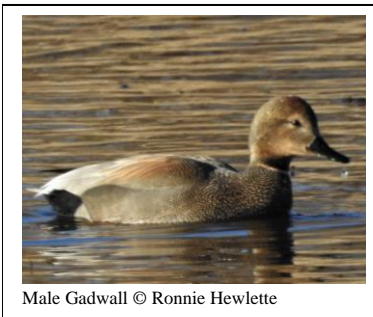


Icy Shore – Lake Mattamuskeet
© Ienny McDiarmid

The first few days of February were rainy, with more than two inches of rain falling in just a couple of days. So much rain fell that the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR found it necessary to close all its roads. This effectively shut us out of our plans to visit the refuge in search of Swans and Cranes on our traditional February trip to this area.

Not to be deterred, we continued with plans to travel to Lake Mattamuskeet NWR on Saturday, February 4th to check out the waterfowl in the area. Initially we had a record number of birders sign up to participate but by the morning of the trip our group had dwindled to around fourteen. Most caravanned from the Chocowinity Rest Area, while a few others chose to meet the group at the main entrance road to Mattamuskeet NWR. We all arrived at the entrance around 8:00 AM.

The temperature at 7:00 AM was around 23° and was slow to warm up; only getting above freezing by midafternoon. Early morning wind was out of the North, but this had the waterfowl bunched up just off the Mattamuskeet Entrance Road – a really good deal for observing the ducks, geese and swans up close.



Male Gadwall © Ronnie Hewlette

Lots of waterfowl! We listed Canada Goose, Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, American Wigeon, Mallard, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, and Ruddy Duck. I've never seen so many Green-winged Teal at one time! Gadwalls and Northern Shovelers made up the largest component in the mix of waterfowl, but we got good looks at Pintails, Wigeons, and Blue-winged Teal. A few Redheads were identified and with them so close to the road, nice pictures were possible. With some effort, the previously reported (eBird) Eurasian Wigeon was identified and added to



Male Redhead © Kevin O’Kane

our list for the day. The Swans were not as numerous as we have had in the past. The flooded fields in the surrounding area may have provided an attraction for them.

We successfully located an Orange-crowned Warbler in the roadside brush, as it responded to our calls. A Kestrel was seen in the top of a tree as we drove along the road, and several Bald Eagles were in the area. Two of the eagles were seen interacting in mid-air, in a courtship display where they grasp talons then cartwheel together back down, only to release, ascend and repeat the ritual.

We worked our way down the road, making a couple stops before reaching the Refuge Headquarters where we stopped for a lunch break. The sun was warming at the picnic tables, and we were sheltered from the wind but the temperatures were still below freezing but it was a nice break – an opportunity to visit and get to know others in the group.



LNBC Lunchbreak © Ronnie Hewlette



Tundra Swans at Gull Rock Game Land
© Ronnie Hewlette

It was now approaching 1:00 PM and from here we drove over to the Gull Rock Game Lands, driving along the Outfall Canal Road. This has proven to be a productive area in past years, and always seems to hold an unexpected find. A couple of stops along the road produced Wild Turkeys, a Greater Yellowlegs, a Long-billed Dowitcher, Cattle Egrets, Tundra Swans and Brewer’s Blackbirds.

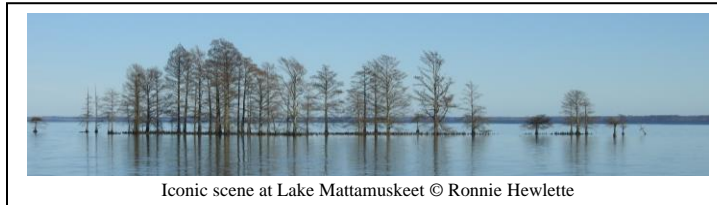
The Brewer’s Blackbird was a *Life-bird* or at least a *State-bird* for several of us. We were scanning a cut-over field with the sun to our backs when a female bird was spotted that looked to be “different” from other birds we had seen. While trying to locate this bird in scopes others in the group spotted two birds that fit the description for a male Brewer’s Blackbird. (Smallest Blackbird with full body and round head, green iridescent body, bright yellow eye). Finally, we felt

confident in reporting four males and one (grayish) female. Wow! We had a perfect vantage point for viewing these birds, to see what Cornell Lab’s *All About Birds* says is “a bird to be seen in full sunlight”, as it describes the greenish sheen....

From here we headed back to the Mattamuskeet Causeway (NC-94) heading North toward the community of Fairfield, in search of Bonaparte’s Gulls and whatever we might find along the causeway. Stopping along the way produced our first Wilson’s snipe of the day. This Snipe flushed from the lake edge as we pulled off the road and it flew away, only to have a second Snipe fly past us as we got out of our vehicles. Driving along the causeway we picked up several Forster’s Terns, Black Ducks, a Merlin perched in a treetop, Song Sparrows, Yellow-rumps and thousands of Tundra Swans seen in the distance, on the North side of the lake.

About 100 feet beyond the Causeway a road goes to the right, then about 200 feet there is a lane being constructed across a swamp overlooking the Lake. The swamp was active with 30- 40 snipe, but we settled for a consensus of 30. About 1/2 dozen Rusty Blackbirds shared the swamp. You just need to stop and LOOK.....!!

At this point it has around 3:30 PM and a smaller group of 10 birders headed north on NC-94 to Lake Phelps, by way of the Columbia Visitor's Center/Rest Stop. No Common Mergansers were seen but they did add a Sharp-shinned Hawk (always a good find), along with several other species. That makes for a long day, but a Great Horned Owl was seen after dark along NC-171 between Plymouth and Washington, as it flew just over the vehicles.



Iconic scene at Lake Mattamuskeet © Ronnie Hewlette

There is always a memory or two to be taken away, when you visit Mattamuskeet NWR!

We had a Great day of Birding!

-Ronnie Hewlette



Go to *Page 5* to see the Species List for the Mattamuskeet Bird Walk

March 4th Bird Walk – Fort Macon SP/surrounding areas.

We will meet Saturday, March 4th at the far end of the Fort Macon parking lot at 7:45 AM
(New Bern Car-poolers should meet at Lawson Creek Park to depart no later than 7:00 AM)

This ½ day of birding will take in the Fort Macon Museum/Visitors Area and beach, with a walk down to the inlet jetty where recent sightings have included a Harlequin Duck, Razorbills, Red-throated Loons, Great Cormorants, and an Ipswich - Savannah Sparrow. *Last year we encountered an early arriving Wilson's Plover on the Ft. Macon Beach!*

Time permitting, we will also visit Hoop Pole Creek Natural Area in Atlantic Beach and Calico Creek in Morehead City.

Make your plans to join us!



Wilson's Plover © Ronnie Hewlette (3/5/22)

Photo Gallery



Hermit Thrush at Simmons St. Park
© Ronnie Hewlette



© Ronnie Hewlette

Guess WHO????
See page 6 for Answer



Surf Scoter at Lawson Creek Park © Tom Leith

Photo Gallery – continued



MATTAMUSKEET BIRD WALK

Species List February 4, 2023

No.	Species	No.	Species	No.	Species
1	Canada Goose	27	Greater Yellowlegs	53	Eastern Phoebe
2	Tundra Swan	28	Bonaparte's Gull	54	American Crow
3	Wood Duck	29	Ring-billed Gull	55	Horned Larks
4	Blue-winged Teal	30	Great Black-backed Gull	56	Tree Swallow
5	Northern Shoveler	31	Herring Gull	57	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
6	Gadwall	32	Forster's Tern	58	Brown-headed Nuthatch
7	Eurasian Wigeon	33	Double-crested Cormorant	59	Winter Wren
8	American Wigeon	34	Great Blue Heron	60	Carolina Wren
9	Mallard	35	Great Egret	61	European Starling
10	American Black Duck	36	Cattle Egret	62	Gray Catbird
11	Northern Pintail	37	White Ibis	63	Northern Mockingbird
12	Green-winged Teal	38	Turkey Vulture	64	Eastern Bluebird
13	Redhead	39	Northern Harrier	65	Hermit Thrush
14	Ring-necked Duck	40	Sharp-shinned Hawk	66	American Robin
15	Bufflehead	41	Cooper's Hawk	67	American Goldfinch
16	Hooded Merganser	42	Bald Eagle	68	Chipping Sparrow
17	Ruddy Duck	43	Belted Kingfisher	69	White-throated Sparrow
18	Wild Turkey	44	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	70	Song Sparrow
19	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	45	Red-bellied Woodpecker	71	Swamp Sparrow
20	Pied-billed Grebe	46	Pileated Woodpecker	72	Red-winged Blackbird
21	Mourning Dove	47	Red-Shouldered Hawk	73	Rusty Blackbird
22	American Coot	48	Red-tailed Hawk	74	Brewer's Blackbird
23	Killdeer	49	Great Horned Owl	75	Common Grackle
24	Least Sandpiper	50	Northern Flicker	76	Orange-crowned Warbler
25	Long-billed Dowitcher	51	American Kestrel	77	Common Yellowthroat
26	Wilson's Snipe	52	Merlin	78	Yellow-rumped Warbler

ANSWER:

GUESS WHO from page 4

CATTLE EGRET



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



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

In Memoriam:

Elizabeth Johnson was an active member of the LNBC about 10 years ago. She served as our Club Secretary for a few years during that period. Elizabeth lived in Jones County and grew up with a love for nature which included great appreciation for her birds.

She died on Feb 7th at the age of 83.

