



## Where Have All the Warblers Gone?

– by George Wheaton

As the daylight grows short and we begin hosting our winter avian visitors, birders often ask, “Where have our warblers gone?” The answer, often given between chattering teeth, is “South.” While this, of course, is generally true, it really begs some questions: “How far south? Just where do you mean by south?” Somewhat surprisingly, virtually none of the field guides we use in North America describes the destinations of our wood warblers (or of most other species for that matter) as they head “south” to warmer climes and more dependable food supplies.



Pine Warbler

In Guilford County we are blessed with a very good assortment of warblers during spring and fall migration. Some species stay here to breed. Many others push farther north into the upper Midwest, New England, and southern Canada. Once the chores of raising a family are over, most species begin their journeys southward to more hospitable wintering grounds. During the course of this avian ebb and flow, roughly 30 species of warblers regularly pass through the Greensboro area, with another half dozen or so remotely possible (the ones that make a birder’s heart pound). Two species, the

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*Editor’s Note: In the chart below, the word “to” stands for “to as far south as...”*

### Primary Southern Destinations of Migrating Warblers

(in order of increasing distance)

Warbler Species	Destinations
Pine	Resident in NC to SE US
Kirtland's	Bahamas
Prairie	Bahamas, West Indies
Cape May	Bahamas, West Indies
Black-throated Blue	Bahamas, Greater Antilles
Orange-crowned	To southern Mexico
Swainson's	West Indies, SE Mexico to Belize and Guatemala
Nashville	Mexico to southern Honduras
Palm	Central Florida, northern Gulf Coast, West Indies, Nicaragua
Northern Parula	To Nicaragua and West Indies
Yellow-throated	Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, Greater Antilles, to Costa Rica
Wilson's	To Costa Rica
Blue-winged	SE Mexico to Panama
Magnolia	To Panama and West Indies
Yellow-rumped	SE US to West Indies and Panama
Hooded	Mexico to Panama
Yellow-breasted Chat	To Panama
Worm-eating	Greater Antilles, SE Mexico, to Panama
Chestnut-sided	Guatemala to Panama
La Waterthrush	Southern Florida, West Indies, to NW South America
American Redstart	Southern US, West Indies, to northern South America
Golden-winged	Greater Antilles, Guatemala, southern Mexico, NW South America
Tennessee	Southern Mexico to NW South America
Prothonotary	Southern US to West Indies and northern South America
Common Yellowthroat	West Indies, SE Mexico, northern South America
Yellow	To northern South America
Ovenbird	To northern South America
Kentucky	Mexico to NW South America
N. Waterthrush	West Indies to northern South America
Black-throated Green	West Indies, Mexico, to northern South America
Mourning	Nicaragua to NW South America
Bay-breasted	Panama and NW South America
Canada	Panama, mountains of NW South America
Black & White	West Indies and Mexico to Peru
Blackpoll	Columbia to Peru and western Amazonian Brazil
Connecticut	South America east of the Andes to Peru and Brazil
Blackburnian	Costa Rica to Bolivia
Cerulean	Mountains of Columbia to Venezuela and Bolivia

Source: Clements, J.F. (2000) Birds of the world: A checklist (5th Ed.). Vista, CA: Ibis.

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resident Pine Warbler and migratory Yellow-rumped Warbler, cast their winter lot with us, and in exceptionally mild winters, a few others may stick it out in the Piedmont. Most, however, leave the U.S. and stay south until their return in the spring.

As migrants head south, they eventually come to a fork in the migratory flyway. The choice is to head southeast into the island habitats of the Caribbean or to head south or southwest into Mexico, Central America, and beyond. For this latter group, “some go by land, others go by sea” – either following the land route through Mexico and Central America, or crossing the Gulf of Mexico with the incredible demands of making a 500-mile flight without any chance to rest (except on the occasional oil rig or fishing boat).

Decisions about routes and destinations are not based on hard-and-fast rules. Individuals from many species migrate on a very broad front so that some wind up in the Caribbean while members of the same species may go instead to Mexico or even to more southerly locations. Thus, birders who head south in the winter may find Northern Parulas in the West Indies and Nicaragua; or Louisiana Waterthrushes in southern Florida, the West Indies, and Columbia.

In the accompanying table, familiar warbler species are listed along with their primary wintering grounds. The table lists species according to the length (roughly estimated) of their flight

from Greensboro. Those near the top of the table fly relatively short distances. Those closer to the bottom are long-distance champions, especially when one considers that some of these birds start their travel as far north as Canada!



Blackpoll Warbler, non-breeding plumage

Runners-up for the most prodigious flights are: Blackpoll Warbler (Columbia to Peru and western Brazil) and Connecticut Warbler (South America east of the Andes to Peru and Brazil). The two co-champions of this odyssey, flying a minimum of 3,800 miles each way during migration, are: Blackburnian Warbler, weighing in at

0.34 ounces (Costa Rica to Bolivia); and Cerulean Warbler, at a mere 0.33 ounces (mountains of Columbia, to Venezuela and Bolivia). Next spring when these birds return to Greensboro, take a moment to think about the distances and obstacles they have overcome and congratulate them on their safe journey.

Source: Clements, J. F. (2000) *Birds of the world: A checklist* (5th Ed.). Vista, CA: Ibis.

## Christmas Bird Count: Bird Count Class - November 5, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

– by Elizabeth Link

If you’ve ever wondered what the Christmas Bird Count is all about, or are interested in participating in the count, come to the Bird Count Class.

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is a national bird count that has been held annually for over 100 years; no other



citizen science effort has such a long and continuous history. Data gathered by the citizen scientists has been used to track bird populations across the country.

The class will be held at the Kathleen Clay Edwards

Family Library, starting indoors with a discussion of elements of the Count. We will cover both the national and local history of the Christmas Bird Count; National Audubon guidelines for establishing the Count circle, Count day, and Count period; reporting rare species; and techniques for counting birds in various situations. We will also discuss the Spring Bird Count. After the class, we will take a birding walk (unless it rains) through Price Park to practice our counting techniques.

This class or experience in a prior bird count is a prerequisite for participation in both the Christmas and spring bird counts. Registration required. Contact: Elizabeth Link, 273-4672, [elzlink@yahoo.com](mailto:elzlink@yahoo.com)

## Holiday Dinner: Reservations Must be Received by Wednesday, November 30

Time flies when you’re having fun birding! It’s time to make reservations for PBC’s Holiday Dinner and Photo Show.

This year’s dinner will be held on Tuesday, December 6, 6:00 p.m. at the same location as last year: the Haywood-Duke Room of [Holy Trinity Church, 607 N. Greene Street](#). Dinner is your choice of a chicken or fish entree, plus side dishes, dessert, and beverages. The cost is \$21.00 per person, including tax and gratuity. Please make checks payable to the Piedmont Bird Club and mail to PBC at P.O. Box 38833,

Greensboro, NC, 27438-8833, in time to be received by the reservation deadline: Wednesday, November 30.

As is our tradition, we will be showing bird- and nature-related photos taken by our members. If you would like to present your photographs, contact Lynn Moseley, 226-4353, [lmoseley@guilford.edu](mailto:lmoseley@guilford.edu).

If you have any questions, or if you have any “birdy” items to donate for door prizes, please contact Social Chair, Janet Goins, 665-1883, [gons5@aol.com](mailto:gons5@aol.com).

# Greensboro Shorebirding, or, “Where are we, Toto?”

– by George Wheaton

This past summer it was easy for a Greensboro birder to imagine she was getting her shorebird fix somewhere along North Carolina’s Outer Banks. It was hot, muggy, and there were shorebirds galore. The latter were present in unusually large numbers due to especially low water conditions at two of Greensboro’s reservoirs (Brandt and Townsend) and assists from Hurricane Irene and other weather systems.

A decent smattering of shorebirds of different species can usually be found in Greensboro from April through at least November. Common visitors include Spotted, Solitary, Pectoral, and Least Sandpipers. The ubiquitous Killdeer can be found nearly every month in appropriate habitat. This year, however, these regular denizens were joined by another 15 or so species, some of which are seldom seen in our area. There is the exciting prospect of increasing this tally by another two to three birds before year’s end.

Special conditions are required to attract an array of shorebirds this far inland. Chief among these is drought. The absence of rain leads to low water levels in our reservoirs and to the emergence of extensive and food-rich mud flats (e.g., bordering Church Street below Lake Jeanette, on the lower reaches of Reedy Fork Creek, and at the mouth of Horsepen Creek). These favorable conditions occurred in 2002, 2007, 2009, and 2011.

The 20 shorebird species that have been reported thus far are listed below. Particularly noteworthy sightings are indicated by an asterisk.

- American-Golden Plover\* - 4th sighting since 1988; last seen in 2007.
- Semipalmated Plover
- Killdeer
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Ruddy Turnstone\* - 5th & 6th sightings since 1966; last seen in 1990.
- Sanderling\* - 3rd & 4th sightings since 1997; three or more birds this year.
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Western Sandpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- White-rumped Sandpiper\* - Up to 12 birds; last seen in 1990 and 2002.
- Pectoral Sandpiper
- Stilt Sandpiper\* - Three this year; last seen in 2002, 2007, 2010.
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper\* - Three to four; last seen 1993 and 2007.
- Short-billed Dowitcher\* - 4th and 5th sightings; last in 1986, 2007, 2008.
- Common Snipe
- American Woodcock
- Red-necked Phalarope\* - 4th appearance; last seen in 1969 and 2009.

This ensemble of waders was rounded out by two other major avian surprises. In spite of their affinity for coastal areas, neither is considered a “shorebird.” Both are first records for Guilford County. On August 30, three storm-blown Royal Terns put in a brief appearance on the mud flats below Lake Jeanette. Even more improbably, an apparent Clapper Rail was photographed one day earlier as it perched on the windowsill of an office building in downtown High Point. The moral of the story for inland shorebirding is to hope for strong winds and receding water levels. (Yes, as Dorothy can also attest, there is excellent shorebirding in Kansas.)



Buff-Breasted Sandpiper  
by Henry Link



Red-necked Phalarope  
by Henry Link



Lesser Yellowlegs  
by Lou Skrabec



Stilt Sandpiper  
by Lou Skrabec



Clapper Rail  
fide Hop Hopkins



Royal Terns & Caspian Terns  
by Henry Link

– by Stephen Bryant

The Piedmont Bird Club was started in 1938. A group of earnest citizens were protesting that too many birds were being killed by cats. So the people went to the city council to get an ordinance to help the birds out. The council said that they would only consider an ordinance if it came from an organized group. Immediately the word went out to the local citizens around the Piedmont and other areas to ask if anyone would like to join an organization. And so, on February 6, 1938, the Piedmont Bird Club was born.

Dr. Wesley Taylor was the club's first and most proud president. He was a member until his death in 1960. Unfortunately, the Bird Club has no written records of activities for the first three years. Down the road, though, the Club began documenting what they had done. The Club has records of the field trips, names of members, and events that the Piedmont Bird Club sponsored. Today's bird club members can look back at the scrapbooks and find interesting things about the club. For example, the membership fee in 1938 was only 50 cents! Today it is \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family. Also in 1938, people had fewer digits in their phone numbers than they have today. The Piedmont Bird Club has had many accomplishments and hopefully it will have many more to come.

## Helping Baby Squirrels

– story by Susan Weimer

Cal and Susan Weimer recently made a trip to [Piedmont Wildlife Rehab](#) to drop off their collection of acorns for the baby and young squirrels. Her cupboard was bare, so founder and president Melissa Coe was glad for the donation. She showed Cal & Susan around the facility and explained how important it is to have the acorns to feed the squirrels, most of which cannot be released until spring because their nest-building skills are minimal at a young age.

Susan and Cal got to feed the squirrels some of the acorns. Melissa said they would eat all day if they could, so she has to ration their access to the acorns. Not all of the more than 60 squirrels rescued this season are at her site; some are cared for at other locations throughout the county.



Susan & Melissa with Hansel & Gretel  
photo by Cal Weimer

Susan met Hansel and Gretel, two groundhogs that have been at the center for 3 years now. They would not make it in the wild because they are so used to human attention. They are great ambassadors and go with Melissa to all of the programs that she presents.

Donations of acorns, native nuts, and pine cones are greatly appreciated. Also, anyone who has time to volunteer for animal care would be welcomed with open arms. In addition to mammals, Piedmont Wildlife Rehab takes in injured and orphaned birds and reptiles. Contact Melissa Coe, 273-6832, [mlsscoe@aol.com](mailto:mlsscoe@aol.com), if you can help.

### Saturday, November 5

#### **Bird Count Class**

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at the Kathleen Clay Edwards Family Library. Learn the history, rules, procedures, and handy tips for counting birds in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and the Spring Count. Registration required.

Contact: Elizabeth Link, 273-4672, [elzlink@yahoo.com](mailto:elzlink@yahoo.com)

### Thursday, November 10

#### **TGPAS Meeting/Program - "Feathered Dinosaurs", 7:00 p.m. KCEF Library**

Do you think that all the dinosaurs are dead? Not so! They just lost their teeth and learned to fly. Join Dr. Randall Hayes, professor at NC A&T State University and host of VSI (the best evolution podcast you've never heard of), as he leads a fun-filled tour of the evidence: feathers, fossils, and modern bird anatomy and behavior.

### Saturday, November 12

#### **Field Trip - Bog Garden**

The Bog Garden, part of the NC Birding Trail, is a magnet for birds. To date, 143 different bird species have been seen there. Join us for this easy walk around the park.

Meet at the [Bog Garden entrance](#) located on Starmount Farm Road at 8:30 a.m. Leader: Louise Brown, 233-7531, [piedmontbirder@triad.rr.com](mailto:piedmontbirder@triad.rr.com)

### Thursday, November 17

#### **PBC Meeting/Program - "Gardening for Birds"**

Elizabeth Link, landscape architect and avid birder, will present ways to make your yard more attractive - to birds and to humans - by providing proper habitat. KCEF Library, Early Birds: 6:30 p.m. Program: 7:00 p.m.

### Thursday-Sunday, November 24-27

#### **Thanksgiving Field Trip - Outer Banks/ Mattamuskeet Area**

Visit important over-wintering destinations for waterfowl and other birds, including Pea Island NWR, Bodie Island, Cape Hatteras, Alligator River NWR, & other areas as time permits. Contact leaders for complete details: Emily Tyler, 375-5770, [ettyler@triad.rr.com](mailto:ettyler@triad.rr.com), and Julien McCarthy, 656-4774, [jbm@triad.rr.com](mailto:jbm@triad.rr.com).

### Wednesday, November 30

Holiday Dinner reservations must be received by this date. See article, page 2.

## Field Trip Report: Sparrow Search - October 23

—by George Wheaton

Six PBC members and one visitor birded the Strader Road and Nutt Road areas along the Rte. 150 corridor in search of sparrows and other birds. The group began at 8:00 a.m. in dense fog, which quickly burned off. The trip concluded at noon under warm and sunny skies – a delightful day.

A total of 51 species was observed with discussion of two or three additional possibilities that couldn't be pinned down with certainty. Six of the hoped-for eight sparrow species were located. The two most unusual sparrows, Vesper and White-crowned, did not turn up. We spent considerable time searching locations where both have been located in the past

on essentially the same date.

Highlights of the trip included the following: multiple sightings of Palm Warblers at virtually every stop along our route; roughly a dozen Tree Swallows hawking insects over a small pond on Nutt Road. They certainly are among the last of their kind to be leaving the Piedmont at this late date. The same can be said of a lingering Gray Catbird. New arrivals in late October were a couple of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. The entire trip list is available upon request. Contact George Wheaton, 540-8953, [gcwheaton@earthlink.net](mailto:gcwheaton@earthlink.net).

## Conservation Committee Report: Adopt-A-Park - October 22

— story & photos by Susan Weimer

**M**other Nature cooperated beautifully: the trees displayed their colors and the light created a mirror image of the woods on the lake. The temperature was quite cool when we started, but it gradually warmed up enough to enjoy a little dip



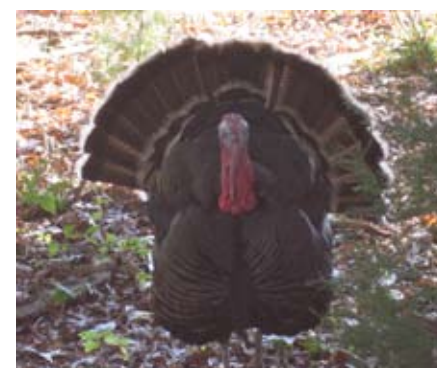
Cynthia & Cal

into a cup of coffee and some scrumptious cookies.

Seven volunteers showed up for Country Park clean-up: Rose Sims, Jane Blackburn, Sally Howell, Carolyn Allen, Cynthia Soemita, Susan Weimer, and Cal Weimer. Many thanks to all who helped.

The lakes provided a treasure trove of trash, including a child's shoe. Bet somebody's mother is mad!

It was the "animal parade" day. The gobbler from the Natural Science Center came down to the fence, posing for pictures. We also spotted a Great Blue Heron, as well as the usual Canada Geese and Mallards. And we heard a Red-bellied Woodpecker and Eastern Bluebirds. The biggest surprise was not a bird, but a local citizen walking his goat named Okie Dokie.



### Interesting Internet

This section contains links to interesting/fun sites that PBC members want to share with the Club.

[Crows vs. Owl](#) - a young Barred Owl comes out a little worse for wear after an encounter with crows

[Einstein Speaks](#) - performing African Gray Parrot at the Knoxville Zoo entertains visitors with his ability to mimic

[My Bird World](#) - new iPad app with 4 interactive games to teach children about North American birds, including their songs, food choices, & habitats.

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### Welcome, New & Returning Members!

#### -- Welcome--

Nancy Adamson  
Katie and Nicholas Harper  
Nan and Jack Turner  
Marie Poteat

#### -- Welcome back--

Kevin & Sumiko Dowling  
Josh Hoffman  
Jim and Frances Ward

