Chapel Hill Bird Club
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The Bulletin

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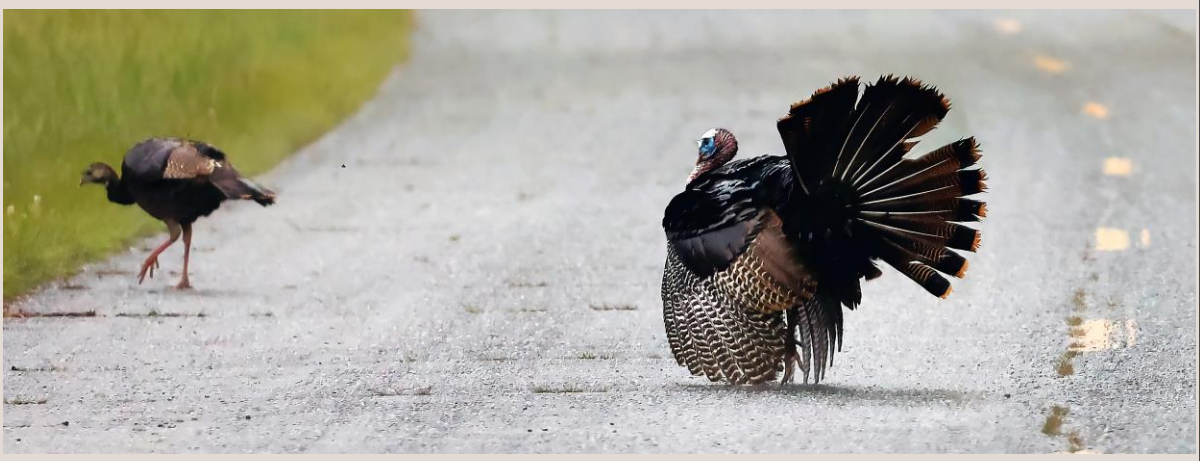

Image by Kelly Mieszkalski

Giving Thanks

I have to admit it, Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. I love turkey, I love mashed potatoes, and I am a glutton for virtually any baked dessert. I also love that the holiday pushes us to remember and reflect on those things that we are thankful for.

In that vein, I am thankful for Chapel Hill Bird Club walks on a crisp autumn morning. The walk to Johnston Mill Nature Preserve early this month was stunning for the weather alone, leave alone the good birds and good company. I am thankful that our winter birds have arrived and are just out there waiting for us to go check them out.

I am thankful for our monthly meetings. We kicked off the year with two academics from Duke who shared their research into birds and taught us a thing or two about the things we care so much about.

I am thankful that Roger is going to enthrall us with his take on a big year this month. I can't wait to hear what he has to say.

I am thankful to have been president of this club for the last two and a half years. It has been a joy for me to have a bigger role in the organization. With that being said, I would like this to be my last year as president. It is time for someone else to take the reins. I am not going anywhere and will be around to help one of you take over and grow this club.

Let's all remember and be thankful for those things we hold dear.

I hope to see you at our membership meeting on November 23.

Cheers,

Bo Howes



Snow bunting. Photo by Roger Shaw

November Program: *Roger Shaw: The Big Fays-Year. A novel birding challenge.*

When: Monday, November 23, 2026 at 7:15pm (light refreshments served at 7:15, program to start at 7:30)

Where: Binkley Baptist Church, 1712 Willow Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 or on Zoom.

RSVP: Let us know you are coming by responding to our Facebook event. To attend by Zoom, register here.

Big Years and Big Days are among the most captivating stories in birding, pushing birders' skills and dedication to the limits. But they also demand tremendous sacrifices of time and energy, that not everyone can afford or maintain. What if a more accessible version of a Big Year existed, that demanded less commitment and time, while still delivering challenge and adventure? In 2023, Roger and a friend developed a fun and novel twist on the Big Year concept, sparking an exciting year of birding around the state.

Roger Shaw is co-Vice-President of the Chapel Hill Bird Club. He began birding as a child in Raleigh, and this lifelong passion led to him pursing an academic career in the field, receiving a PhD in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior from the University of Texas at Austin. While in graduate school, he was also a co-instructor for the university's Ornithology class, leading students on weekly local field trips, as well as long weekend trips to every corner of Texas. He now works as a data scientist in healthcare, but still regularly ventures outdoors across the state in search of birds, butterflies, orchids, and other kinds of adventures in nature.



Photo courtesy of Roger Shaw

REMINDER: NCHBC Student Travel Grant for MLK Weekend Field Trips

Apply by November 15, 2026!

The Chapel Hill Bird Club will **provide a travel grant of $300** (to help cover the costs of travel, food, and lodging) **plus a waiver of the requested $75 donation** for two students to participate in a CHBC sponsored overnight weekend birding trip. The CHBC Student Travel Grant is open to students (undergraduate or graduate) who are current members of the Chapel Hill Bird Club. Priority is given to students who have participated in organized CHBC or New Hope Bird Alliance walks, meetings, and other activities and who have not received a travel grant from CHBC in the past three years.

To apply, please submit an email application with “CHBC Student Travel Grant” in the subject line to Bo Howes (bohowes at gmail) and Do Hodgson (dolohodgson at gmail) that:

1. Provides contact details (name, address, email, phone number)
2. Confirms that you are a current member of the Chapel Hill Bird Club
3. Confirms that you are currently a student (undergraduate or graduate) at a nearby college or university: What is your institution? What program are you in and what is your current status (first year, PhD, etc.)?
4. Describes your involvement with the Chapel Hill Bird Club and/or New Hope Bird Alliance, including participating in walks, attending meetings, volunteering on committees, etc.

For the January 2027 CHBC trip to Huntington Beach, **the deadline for applications is November 15th, 2026.**



It's Membership Renewal Time!

You are invited to renew your membership to the Chapel Hill Bird Club for calendar year 2027 by January 1st, 2027. Dues are $25 per calendar year for individuals and families (and you can pay for two years at a time), and still just $10 for students. Please visit our membership page for information about paying your dues by PayPal or check. If you have a question about the status of your membership, contact Do Hodgson (Treasurer, CHBC).



Photo courtesy of Bo Howes

Field Trips

Join us on one of our bird walks held during the first and third weekends of each month. Bo Howes led our last bird walk on November 7th at Johnson Mill Nature preserve. The group had beautiful weather and saw 33 species. See complete eBird checklist here.

Our next bird walk will be on Sunday November 22nd at Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment, about 0.4 miles north of Jock Road.

Outings usually last 2-3 hours. No reservations or sign-up needed. If there is a large turnout for any particular outing, we may split into two groups. We do recommend carpooling for families or friend pods; while we love pets, there is a ‘no-pet’ policy for bird outings. New birders and birders of all skill levels are welcome. Please wear long pants, socks, and sturdy shoes (ticks and chiggers may be present). Sun and bug protection are also recommended. Bring snacks and water if you like. Heavy rain will result in cancellation.

Check our bird walk schedule for more information. You may also find additional bird walks on New Hope Bird Alliance's Calendar of Events.



November 7th Outing at Johnston Mill Nature Preserve. Photo courtesy of Bo Howes.

Monthly Funny



Contribute to Our Monthly Bulletin

Do you have a recent birding trip (near or far) that you want to share? We would love to hear about it and see your photos in a future issue of the Bulletin. Just email Kelly Mieszkalski.

The purpose of the Chapel Hill Bird Club is to provide engagement and educational opportunities for area birders of all experience levels. We offer interesting educational programs, local birding field trips, Christmas and spring bird counts, and connection to other members via a Facebook group. Members have access to like-minded people including experts who can answer your questions. Whether you watch birds in your yard or travel to the ends of the earth to chase rarities, our club offers something for you. We are a friendly group and welcome all to join us, especially new birders! Our members are mostly from the Research Triangle area of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, Cary, Pittsboro, and surrounding towns.
