



The Bulletin

September 2026
Volume 54, Number 1

Welcome Back!



Swallow-tailed Kite, Photo courtesy of Joe Donahue

As I write this on September 3 our high temperature was over 100 degrees. The brief moment I was outside, it felt every bit of that. Despite the warm temps autumn is upon us, birds are migrating, and the Chapel Hill Bird Club is preparing to start our monthly meetings again. Our vice presidents have assembled a stellar roster of speakers for the year. Biel Macedo kicks us off sharing their research on the evolution of bird traits. I am excited about our mix of avian research, birding travel, and all things birdy. I hope you are able to join us for our meetings.

In other news, our new and old officers met over the summer to help plan for the year. In addition to our monthly meetings, we will again lead a trip over MLK weekend (venue TBD). We also plan to lead a spring migration weekend trip in

2027. We also will continue our twice monthly bird walks to a local hotspot. Check our bird walk schedule at www.chapelhillbirdlcub.org to find where and when the walk will take place.

Personally, I have had less time to bird this summer than years past. I hope to rectify that this fall. I have read the reports of a Canada Warbler staying several days at Brumley North and of a Hudsonian Godwit appearing locally as a one-day wonder. I did get a chance to see the Swallow-Tailed Kites that were remarkably accommodating in Wake County at the end of July/early August. Alas, my photography skills came up short and none of my photos did justice to those beautiful birds, but Joe Donahue was kind enough to share one of his above. All that is to say, it's time to go look for some birds.

See you soon,

Bo Howes



September Program: *Biel Macedo— Not All Sexual Monomorphisms Evolve Equally: Female & Male Ornamentation in Tyranni Passerines*

When: Monday, September 28, 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](#).

Female animals often have ornaments such as conspicuous coloration. However, the evolution of female ornamentation and its contribution to sexual dimorphism are understudied relative to male ornamentation. In this talk, I will show how our research at the Lipshutz Lab addresses this knowledge gap. We investigated the evolution of female and male plumage ornamentation in over 870 species of Tyranni (suboscine) passerines in relation to sociosexual selection, i.e., the differential reproductive success resulting from competition for mates and other socially limited resources

(e.g., territories, nest sites). One of our main findings is that females and males show similarly high ornamentation (elaborate monomorphism) in accordance with strong and shared sociosexual selection pressures, for instance in territorial, non-migratory, monogamous species with biparental care, and species nesting in cavities. Our research provides a framework for testing how selective pressures shape both female and male traits, which is key to understanding the evolution of sex differences and similarities.

Speaker Bio: Gabriel (Biel) Macedo is a postdoctoral associate at Duke University in the Lipshutz Lab studying the evolution and genomics of female ornamentation in birds, as well as the transcriptomics of song discrimination in song sparrows. Biel received his PhD in Evolution and Diversity from the Federal University of ABC in Brazil and was a Fulbright visiting researcher at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, studying the evolution of songs, coloration and behavior of females and males of Neotropical birds.

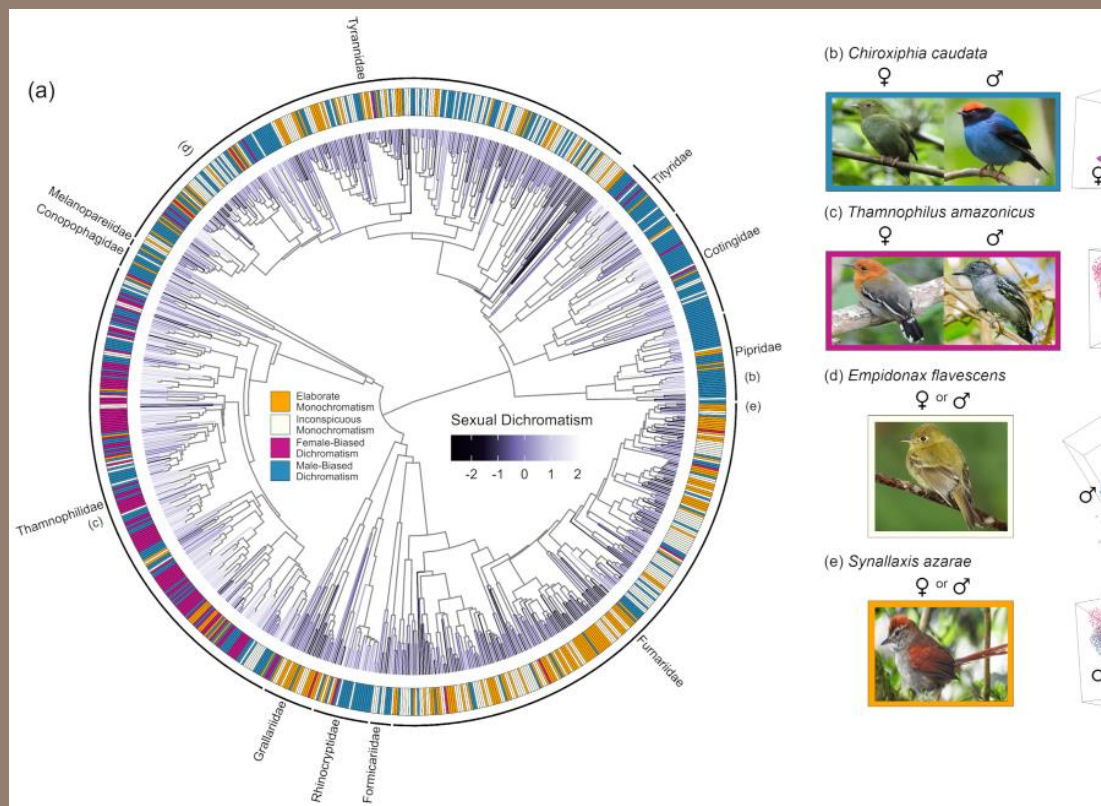


Photo Credits: b, female: Jean-Paul Boerekamps (CC0); b, male: Carlos Moura (CC-BY-NC); c, female: Edwin Múnera Chavarría (CC-BY-NC); c, male: Anderson Sandro (CC-BY-NC); ; d: Mdf (CC0); e: Saul Arias (CC-BY-NC).

2026-2027 Officers

Elected Officers

President: Bo Howes

Vice Presidents: Roger Shaw, Jenny Devieu

Treasurer: Do Hodgson

Co-Secretaries Holly McKinney, Trish Kalivoda

Appointed Officers

Field Trip Chairman: Jim Capel

Bulletin Managing Editor: Kelly Mieszkalski

Bird Count Supervisor/Compiler: Will Cook

Webmasters: Will Cook, Kent Fiala

About Our New Officers

Holly McKinney

Holly grew up among birders in her family, including one who became a full-fledged ornithologist. While birding was always an interest, it wasn't until COVID that she and husband, Ross, became serious birders with life lists currently nearing 1,000. Her bird focus extends to volunteering in ways that benefit birds: with the NHBA Bird Friendly Habitat program serving as a scheduler and plant recorder and with the UNC Botanical Garden and elsewhere to remove invasive plants. As for secretarial experience, she loves to organize!



Trish Kalivoda

Trish, and her husband Kenny, recently moved to Chapel Hill and have been pleasantly surprised by the number of bird enthusiasts and birding groups in the area. It has been a wonderful way to meet people and to find great places to walk.

Birding in Yellowstone, Bozeman & Butte

By Do Hodgson

In August, we visited Yellowstone National Park (starting with the glorious Beartooth Highway from Red Lodge) for three nights, then Bozeman (where I birded the small but bountiful [Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve](#) that was walking distance from town), two nights in smoky Butte (where I hired Caleb Lashway, a top birder in Montana who works with his grandfather as part of [Go Bird Montana](#),

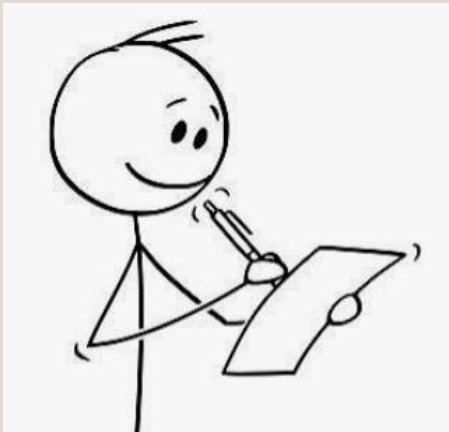


visiting the [Warm Spring WMA](#), [Lost Creek State Park](#), and other sites), and then sadly had to cancel the Glacier NP part of our trip because of the wildfire smoke – so returned to Bozeman for a night (and one more morning of birding at Indreland) and then flew home. All told, I saw 26 lifers. My highlights were a juvenile Golden Eagle, Harlequin ducks, the fascinating Clark's Nutcracker, both Peregrine and Prairie falcons, and watching several American coots slowly build up their nests in

the wetland preserve.



All photos courtesy of Do Hodgson



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](mailto:kelly.mieszkalski@gmail.com).

Field Trips

Join us on one of our bird walks held during the first and third weekends of each month. Check our [bird walk schedule](#) for more information.



Recent field trip at Brumley North Nature Preserve coordinated with our friends at New Hope Bird Alliance.

Photo courtesy of Bo Howes

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.
