



The Bulletin

March 2026
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Red Shouldered Hawk in North Durham, photo courtesy of [Kelly Mieszkalski](#)

Spring Tease

Happy false spring. Birds are singing, trout lilies are blooming, buckeyes are leafing out, not to mention my favorite, trilliums, are rising up from the ground. Don't believe for a minute that this means we are rolling right into spring migration. It will get cold again, we will have more days of chilly blustery weather, and migration won't peak until May. What you can believe is that the first migrants are showing up.

I saw a note about a Yellow-breasted Chat at Bynum Bridge. Rumors of tree swallows checking out their nesting boxes at Pine Island Sanctuary at the coast. The Barred Owls outside my window in the morning are hooting up a storm. All this means it is time to clean out your bird houses, put up your hummingbird feeder (if you don't keep it up all year, just in case), and polish up those binoculars. The birds are coming back!



Trout Lily, Photo courtesy of Kelly Mieszkalski

The Chapel Hill Bird Club will be back for our march meeting on the 23rd. Curtis Smalling of Audubon NC will join to regale us with tales of Motus Towers and how they assist us in tracking those migrating birds. I bet if we ask him nicely, he can give us tips on finding Golden-winged Warblers.

See you at the meeting or on one of our bird walks!

Cheers,
Bo Howes



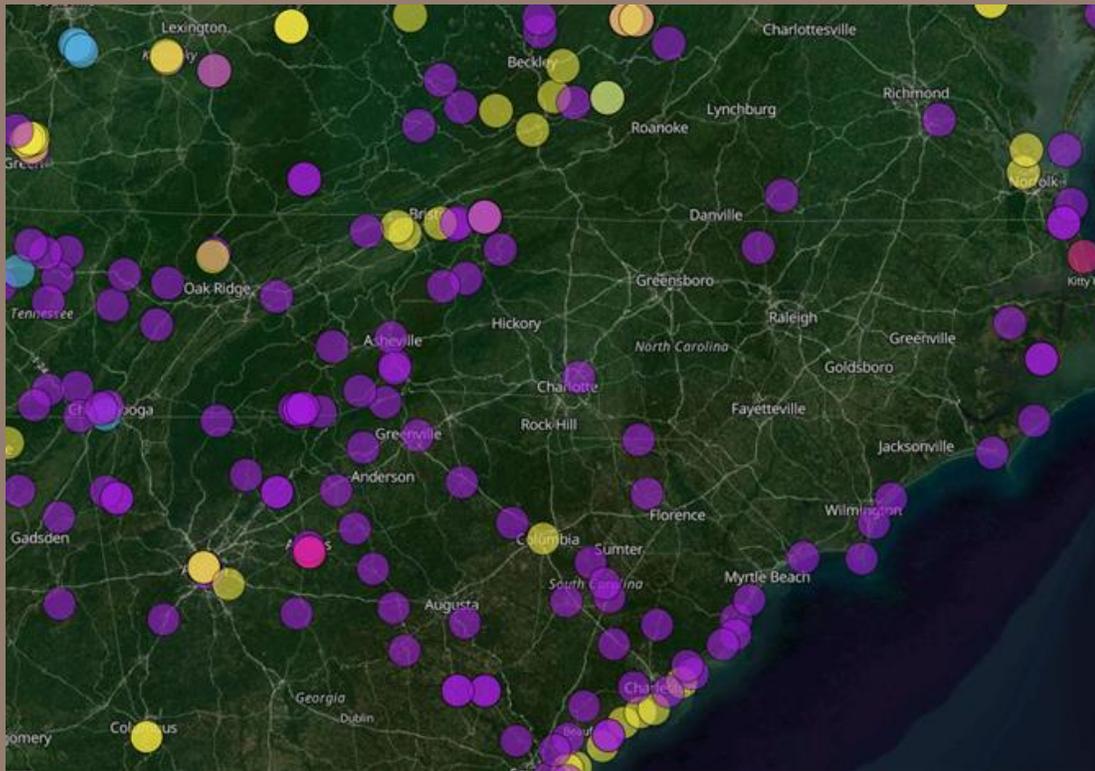
March Program: *Curtis Smalling — Motus Towers & Tracking Birds*

When: Monday, March 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](#).

We are in a golden age of migration science, with tracking technology revealing new insights into the epic journeys of migratory birds. This session will explore the Motus tower network and Audubon's Bird Migration Explorer, offering guidance on how your chapter can contribute by installing a tower in your community. Motus towers are affordable and easy to set up, but more are needed to build out the network in North Carolina, especially in Piedmont.



Motus towers in the Carolinas. Image courtesy of Curtis Smalling

Curtis Smalling is a 1985 magna cum laude graduate of Appalachian State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and in 1996 received a Master of Arts in Appalachian Studies. A life-long bird watcher, Curtis began watching birds with his grandfather, who was very interested in Purple Martins. With Audubon NC for more than 23 years, his current position is Vice President and Executive Director.

Curtis is a member of several conservation committees including the International Golden-winged Warbler working group (including working on this species and others on their wintering grounds in Nicaragua), chair of the NC State Scientific Council Bird Committee, and a member of the steering committee for the Bird Atlas effort in NC. He has been involved in wind and bird interactions for two decades, including service on NC's first wind

working group and helping draft legislation and model local ordinances regarding wind energy in NC.

Curtis is also a contributing author or editor for several books, publications, and peer reviewed papers. He resides in Garner, NC with his wife of 42 years, Mary, and has three children and five grandchildren.



Crews prep a Motus tower on Lea Island. Photo: Lindsay Addison/Audubon

Field Trips

We have bimonthly field trips from September through April, except during bird count seasons. Check our [bird walk schedule](#) for dates and times.



The bird of the day on the March 8th field trip to the Flat River was this Eastern Kingsnake.

Photo courtesy of Kent Fiala.



Membership Renewal

If you haven't done so already, please renew your membership to the Chapel Hill Bird Club for calendar year 2026. As a reminder, dues are \$25 per calendar year for individuals and families (and you can pay for two years at a time), and just \$10 for students. Please visit our [membership web 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).

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.

See you next month!