



“Bird-watching and recognition may seem like a gentle hobby but it is much more than that.”

~ Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

September Meeting

Date: Monday, October 13th, 7:00 PM
Place: AMC Lifetime Building/Blue Ridge Community College Education Center

Program: What's Bugging You?

Speaker: Dr. Arthur Evans



Dr. Art Evans is a respected entomologist, author, photographer and popular speaker who has informed and entertained members of the Augusta Bird Club with past presentations. Please join Dr. Evans on a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of his latest

books, **National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to Insects and Spiders of North America** and **What's Bugging You? A fond look at the animals we love to hate**. The latter work is a collection of essays from his popular column in the Richmond Times-Dispatch. Art will also provide a sneak previews of his next two books entitled **Field Guide to Beetles of Eastern North America** for Princeton University Press, and **An Introduction to Insects of Virginia and the Carolinas** for University of Virginia Press.

Art is a Research Associate at the Smithsonian Institution, Virginia Museum of Natural History, and Virginia Commonwealth University. He works for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage, a state agency that oversees rare,

threatened, and endangered species and habitats throughout the Commonwealth.



Field Trips

Hello fellow birders. Once again we embark upon another season of field trips for your birding pleasure. If anyone out there has an ideal or a special place they want to share please contact Jo King kingbird10@yahoo.com or Allen Lerner larnersky@mindspring.com.

Saturday, Oct. 11th: Swoope & Augusta Wetlands Meeting place / time: Staunton Big Lots parking lot, 8:00 AM

Coordinator: Allen Lerner at larnersky@mindspring.com or 886-1416

Join Allen Lerner for this adventure to the open fields & ponds of the Swoope area where we will be looking for Sparrows, Waterfowl, Red-headed Woodpeckers & who knows what else we will find. After the Swoope venture we will end our trip by walking around the Augusta Springs Wetlands look-

ing for more birds. Trip will occur rain or shine. Dress for the weather & bring snacks.

Saturday, Nov. 15th: Lake Moomaw & Bath County Meeting place / time: Staunton Big Lots parking lot, 7:30 AM

Coordinator: Allen Lerner at larnersky@mind-spring.com or 886-1416

Join Allen Lerner on this annual fall adventure into Bath County where we will be looking for Loons, Grebes, Ducks, Eagles, etc. Dress for the weather & bring snacks. Ice or snow will cancel the trip.

Special Note Regarding Field Trips

-- All trips are subject to be cancelled due to heavy fog , rain , snow or ice . The trip leader will let you know or call the trip leader to find out because YOUR safety is our main concern.

Chirps From the President

It has been a long dry summer, but fall is here and we have just had a really nice rain. With fall come those confusing fall warblers, perhaps you have seen some and even identified them. If not, there are several good bird walks coming up that you can participate in. If you have never been to McCormick's Mill with Jo you might enjoy doing so. It is a trip that is short and enjoyable.



As you heard at the last meeting we will not be selling bird seed this year so you will need to seek other sources. If you have found some good seed feel free to share that information. Unfortu-

nately a lot of the mixed seed in stores is not equal to what we have been providing. So if you find a good mixture, let the members know. Also some of you may be interested in the Rockingham Bird Club seed sale.

I want to express our special thanks to Paul Callo who does a great job of putting our Newsletter together. If you are not getting your letter by email and would like to, notify him. Also, you agreed at the last meeting to get your notice for dues through the Newsletter so your notice will come in that fashion at the end of this year.

-Grant Simmons

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE: RESPECT YOUR ELDER



The American Elder – *Sambucus canadensis* is a variable sized (6 to 12 feet) multi-stemmed shrub, often broad and rounded with branches spreading and arching. It is stoloniferous or prone to suckering.

I was prompted to write about the American Elder (or Elderberry as it is, probably, more commonly, known) during a family trip to North Carolina. We admired scores of roadside and hedgerow clumps of elderberries in full flower, creamy-white, slightly convex, 6 to 10 inch wide flower heads, usually, covering the entire plant.

In late summer, the flowers have given way to large clusters of very attractive red to purplish/black berries (depends on variety). The fruit is good for jellies, pies, juice and wine and, of course, attracting birds. Incidentally, the birds have never let us harvest any fruit but we are not worried.

The American Elder is native from Nova Scotia and Manitoba to Florida and Texas, usually, found growing in damp, rich soil. Will grow in full sun or partial-shade, although it does best in moist soils and will tolerate dry soils; thrives under acid or alkaline conditions. On established bushes, cut stems that are more than 3 years old to ground level, each winter. If you are looking for a naturalizing effect, you can leave the suckers; if not, prune

away unwanted suckers to control spread. For best fruit set, you need to plant multiple clones.

We found a clump of "native" American Elder near the small stream on our property and have added to the varieties over the years. We, now, have the following growing at *Omanu*, our Earlysville, VA garden:

European Elder *Sambucus nigra* A large multi-stemmed shrub. Appears to be more shade tolerant than its American cousin. The large flowers are yellowish white, giving way to large clusters of lustrous black edible fruit in September. There are numerous cultivars associated with this species and the ones in our garden are as follows:

"Cut Leaf Elder"
Sambucus nigra laciniata also called "Laciniata". This is a wonderful form of elderberry presenting finely dissected leaflets, not unlike the cut leaf Japanese Maple. A smaller 6 to 8 foot shrub.



"Marginata" This most handsome form has leaflets that are, initially, margined creamy-yellow fading to creamy-white. Partial shade will retain the color better than full sun.



"Black Beauty" A new variety that I have, yet, to acquire. Described as having dark purple-black leaves and pink flower clusters. Very ornamental as the foliage stays dark throughout the growing season.

Other varieties include: "Adams" which produces numerous fruits in large clusters. "Johns" which is a Larger plant than the "Adams" and is used to cross pollinate the other plants. And lastly, "Nova" which will set fruit by itself and is a smaller bush than the "Adams" variety

-Bill Leaning, May 2004

September Meeting Minutes

The Augusta Bird Club met at 7:00pm on Sept. 8,2008 at Augusta Medical Center, Fishersville, Virginia. The meeting was called to order by president Grant Simmons. Grant introduced the club officers for the new year of 2008-2009 and welcomed new members and visitors. He then asked what we were seeing. A Redstart, lots of Ruby -throated hummingbirds and an early date for American Pipits was reported.

Since the club does not have a seed sale or other fund raisers planned for the year, the club felt a raise in dues would off-set the decrease in the education/conservation fund. The club voted to raise the fees of individual and family memberships by \$5.00. The contributing and sustaining fees will remain the same.

Phoebe and Rebecca Shaw, Nature Camp participants, gave a brief report on their experiences there. Nature Camp is supported by ed/conservation funds.

Allen Lerner and Elaine Carwile braved the weather for the Sat. field trip to the Blue Ridge Parkway. It was raining too much for birding there but they did see a few shore birds and lots of Indigo Buntings at Quillens.

Walt Childs spoke about a field trip to Crane Creek and Magee Marsh in Ohio planned for May 17-21. A trip there nets around 150 species with 30 of them being warblers. This sounds like an exciting trip, see the bulletin for more details.

Jo King reported Swift Night Out is Sept. 12-14 at Stuart Hall. There were over 8000 swifts counted there on the night of Sept.7,2008.

Allen reported he is doing the Kiptopeke Challenge this year with a new team member,Janice Frye. Last year Allen and John Spahr were the Augusta Bald Eagle Team. Please send all pledges to Allen at 1362 new Hope Road, Staunton,Va.

John Spahr then introduced our speaker for the evening, Anne Little. She gave a very practical and useful program on Bluebird basics which included pertinent information on attracting and keeping Bluebirds in our backyards.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Reed, secretary

Treasurer's Report
submitted by Ed Lawler

8/01/2008 – 8/31/2008

REGULAR OPERATING FUND		
BALANCE - 7/31/2008	\$ 4,292.79	
INCOME	\$ 58.00	
EXPENSES	\$ 16.70	
BALANCE - 6/30/2008		\$ 4,334.09
EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND		
BALANCE - 7/31/2008	\$ 6,628.82	
INCOME	\$ -	
EXPENSES	\$ -	
BALANCE - 8/31/2008		\$ 6,628.82
TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 6/30/2008		\$ 10,962.91

Send change of address to:

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Virginia Society of Ornithology Website

<http://virginiabirds.net>

Augusta Bird Club Website

www.augustabirdclub.org

