



“If it looks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, we have at least to consider the possibility that we have a small aquatic bird of the family Anatidae on our hands.”

~ Douglas Adams

November Meeting

Date: Monday, November 10th, 7:00 PM
Place: AMC Lifetime Building/Blue Ridge Community College Education Center
Program: Bats in Virginia
Speaker: Rick Reynolds, Biologist VDGIF



There are about a dozen species of bats in Virginia, two of which are endangered or threatened. These infrequently seen, and even less well understood, flying mammals are a valuable part of our rich wildlife diversity.

Bats are extremely beneficial in controlling night-flying insects with a single bat capable of catching hundreds of insects in one hour. There are many other beneficial and curious aspects of these creatures that have on this earth for over 50 million years. Rick Reynolds, a wildlife biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, will inform and enlighten us about some of our bats.

He will also share some of the challenges facing bats today, from disease to wind generating towers.



Field Trips

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.

Wednesday, November 12: McCormick's Mill
Meeting place/time: Meet at the McDonald's parking lot at the Colonial Mall in Staunton at 8:30 a.m. or at the Mill at 9:00 a.m.
Coordinator: Jo King at kingbird10@yahoo.com or 886-3022 or 430-0186

Join Jo King for a leisure walk of the Marl Creek Trail at McCormick's Mill in hopes of finding many wintering birds such as Brown Creeper, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows, some kinglets and waterfowl. Maybe a late summer migrant still hanging around would be a good find. Dress for the weather. Rain and snow will cancel this trip.

Saturday, Nov. 15th: Lake Moomaw & Bath County
Meeting place/time: Staunton Big Lots parking lot, 7:30 AM
Coordinator: Allen Lerner at larnersky@mindspring.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.

November 21, 22, 23: Chincoteague and Virginia's Eastern Shore – a joint trip with Monticello Bird Club.

Meeting place and time: Contact Allen Lerner

Leaders: Allen Lerner larnersky@mind-spring.com or 886-1416 and John Zimmerman of Charlottesville jozimmva@embarqmail.com

We will join members of the Monticello Bird Club on this fall favorite for a weekend trip to the eastern shore. Some of previous years' highlights include the Gray and Western Kingbirds, Common Redpoll, and Short-eared Owls. Of course the many waterfowl, especially large flocks of Snow Geese, at the wildlife refuge are always a big hit. There are many lodging options in Chincoteague, details of which can be found at the following lodging directory <http://www.chincoteague.com/hotels.html>

February 10-18, 2009: Costa Rica Birding Trip
Coordinator: Diane Holsinger
dhworkout@yahoo.com or 540-896-7132

Come see the beautiful birds of Costa Rica on this week-long field trip.

Travelers will stay at the beautiful Savegre Mountain Lodge located at about 7,200 feet on the Pacific slope of the Talamanca Mountains. The Savegre River Valley is one of the best location to find the Resplendent Quetzal. The valley is home to a thriving population of Quetzals. In previous trips we saw the Quetzal many times & got the bird in the scope. Also there are many species of hummingbirds that can be seen here regularly, including: Fiery-Throated, Green Violet Ear, Magnificent, & Volcano .

The second stop will be La Selva Biological Station located on the Caribbean Lowlands. Toucans and woodpeckers abound. Including the Chestnut-mandibled Toucan, Rufous winged, Chestnut-colored, and Pale-billed Woodpeckers. Here we have seen the Great Curassow (male & female) and King Vultures

We will also take a Boat Ride on the Sarapiquí River in the afternoon. Here we birded leisurely from the boat and had great views of Howler Monkeys. Lastly we will stay at the Arenal Observatory Lodge near the volcano. Possible birds include the Yellow-throated Euphonia & Barred Antshrikes.

If you have never been to the tropics or Costa Rica, you won't be disappointed. If you are wor-

ried about finding or identifying birds, a bird guide will be with us at all three lodges.

Call or email Diane for price & more information.

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

The fall colors have been beautiful and now that the leaves are starting to fall so are the birds coming to my feeders. White throated sparrows are scratching for seeds on the ground while Gold Finches peck at the niger seed. The usual Red-bellied Woodpecker is showing himself with Chickadees flying in and out collecting sunflower seeds. Tufted Titmice are abundant and I am anticipating both Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers to show up soon. Starting the first week of November I will be counting all the birds I see for two days each week and recording the numbers for Project Feeder Watch sponsored by the Cornell Lab. If you want to check it out go to www.feederwatch.org. This count continues throughout the winter, two days per week.

A second program that will be coming up in November is the Thanksgiving one hour count. In that count you imagine a 15 foot circle and for one hour count all the birds that enter that circle. There is also a Great Backyard count for three days in February sponsored by Audubon and the Lab.

These counts along with the Christmas counts help us to evaluate any changes in the bird populations in our area and across the States. John and Crista have already set the dates for the Christmas count and they will appreciate your signing up early to help out. Those counts involve covering a designated area and identifying all the birds in that area. Spring and fall offer great birding opportunities but so does the winter. So join in by both window watching and taking walks.

-Grant Simmons

Join Audubon's Citizen Science Team To Tell the World Why Birds Count

Our bird club hosts two annual Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) each year. Members and non-members, whether expert or novice birders, are invited to participate. The dates for this year are as follows:

Augusta County Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 14, 2008

Contact Person/Compiler: John Spahr

ispahr@augustamed.com or 540-887-2345

Tally pot-luck dinner: will be at John & Nancy Spahr's house 234 W. Frederick St. Staunton, Sunday evening @ 6:00.

Waynesboro Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, January 3, 2009

Contact Person/Compiler: Crista Cabe

ccabe@mbc.edu or 540-234-9155

Tally dinner: to be announced

From December 14, 2008 through January 5, 2009, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas will take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Grandmothers and students, soccer moms and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists will head out on an annual mission – often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house in the middle of



winter.

These Citizen Scientists are taking action for conservation. By participating in Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, they help scientists understand how birds are faring amid unprecedented environmental challenges. The data they collect informs the world

about the State of Birds, and provides the information we need to shape their future and ours.

Last year, thousands of volunteers counted nearly 60 million birds across the Americas and beyond. Each count occurs in a designated circle, 15 miles in diameter, and is led by an experienced birder, or designated "compiler".

The longest running Citizen Science program in the world, the count originally began on Christmas Day in 1900 when ornithologist and legendary birder Frank Chapman posed an alternative to an earlier traditional holiday "side hunt." Chapman proposed "hunting" birds to record their numbers. Instead of firing a shotgun, now we have an annual snapshot. Decades of data have added up to results envied by other scientists who don't enjoy such a fleet of volunteer help, or creatures as easily seen and counted as birds.

"Last year these birds sent us a clear message that their fate is determined by human activity more than anything else," said Audubon President [John Flicker](#) when announcing [WatchList 2007](#). The using CBC and other data sources, WatchList identified 178 species in the continental U.S. and 39 in Hawaii that are imperiled. The report was based on the latest available research, including the Christmas Bird Count. In June of 2007, CBC results were pivotal to the [Common Birds in Decline Report](#) which revealed that some of America's most beloved and familiar birds have taken a nosedive over the past forty years, with some down as much as 80 percent.

Project FeederWatch Benefits Birds and People

More than 100 studies have shown that getting closer to nature reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being in children and adults. So, filling feeders and counting the birds that visit may be just what the doctor ordered! For more than 20 years, that's what participants in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch have been doing-benefitting themselves and the birds.

"It is a great winter time activity for the whole family," says Alaska FeederWatcher Nancy Darnell. "If you have children, they will come to love watching the birds. All of this is fun and a chance to contribute to scientific studies, too!"

The 2008-09 season of **Project FeederWatch gets underway November 8** and runs through April 3. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Partici-

pants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges—a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

“Being a FeederWatcher is easy and fun, and at the same time helps generate the world’s largest database on feeder-bird populations,” says project leader David Bonter. “We are grateful for the contributions our participants have made for the birds and are proud of the joy they say it brings to their busy lives. Since we started in 1987, more than 40,000 people have submitted observations, engaging with the wildlife beyond their windows.”

“Project FeederWatch opened up a whole new world for me,” says participant Cheri Ryan of Lockport, Kentucky. “It’s so interesting to watch the activities of the birds. I learn something new each time I participate.”

Scientists learn something new from the data each year, too, whether it’s about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of rarely-seen species. Highlights of the most recent season include the largest southward movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the history of the project—part of an expected influx of northern birds that fly farther south when their food supplies run short. Other northern species showing up in record numbers included Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins. Among the rare birds reported was a Streak-backed Oriole in Loveland, Colorado—the state’s first report of this bird, native to Mexico. A December nor’easter deposited a Dovekie in Newton, Massachusetts, the first time this North Atlantic seabird has ever been reported to Project FeederWatch.



Long-term data show some species increasing in number, such as the Lesser Goldfinch in the Southwest. Other populations continue a downward

trend, such as the Evening Grosbeak throughout their range. Once one of the most common species seen at feeders in the northern half of the continent, the grosbeaks are declining for unknown reasons.

Beyond the benefits to birds and science, however, is the benefit to participants. “Nature is not merely an amenity; it is critical to healthy human development and functioning,” says Nancy Wells, Cornell University assistant professor of design and environmental analysis. Her studies find that a view of nature through the window or access to the environment in any way improves a child’s cognitive functioning and reduces the negative effects of stress on the child’s psychological well-being. Wells also notes that when children spent time with nature early in life it carries over to their adult attitudes and behavior toward the environment.

Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors. To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the *Feeder-Watcher’s Handbook*, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, *Winter Bird Highlights*.

Many FeederWatchers echo this comment from Mary Strasser of Wisconsin: “The greatest reward for me as a participant in Project FeederWatch these many years has been observing birds and behavior that I might have missed had I not been part of this project.”

October Meeting Minutes

The Augusta Bird Club met at 7:00pm on October 13, 2008 at Augusta Medical Center, Fishersville, Virginia. The meeting was called to order by president Grant Simmons who welcomed all to a “Buggy Night”; Buggy being a reference to our guest speaker. Grant then asked what we were seeing. Allen responded with Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, peak counts for sparrows, different species, many woodpeckers and even a Bobcat. Linda reported two Bald Eagles spotted on a recent canoe trip with Lisa. A White-rumped Sandpiper was seen at Leonards’ Pond. We were reminded that many birding spots are listed on our web site with directions to these locations. The field trip to Nelson County was attended by several local members and four out of towners. The trip was led by Tim Hodge and netted 49 species.

Linda Matkins then brought up the subject of fund raising for the club. We are in need of more funds if we are to send more students to Nature Camp. Several ideas were put forth but nothing decided upon. She asked us to bring ideas to meetings and also e-mail her with items we might have for a silent auction. Harry Lumadue passed out membership applications and encouraged each of us to get a new member to join.

Jim Reed then introduced the speaker for the evening, Dr. Art Evans. Dr. Evans is a respected entomologist, author and photographer. He has been with us before and is a very popular speaker. Tonight he will speak primarily about the behind the scenes creation of his latest books.

The meeting adjourned around 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Reed, secretary

Treasurer's Report

submitted by Ed Lawler

9/01/2008 – 9/30/2008

REGULAR OPERATING FUND		
BALANCE - 7/31/2008	\$ 4,334.09	
INCOME	\$ -	
EXPENSES	\$ 222.00	
BALANCE - 6/30/2008		\$ 4,112.09
EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND		
BALANCE - 7/31/2008	\$ 6,628.82	
INCOME	\$ -	
EXPENSES	\$ 975.00	
BALANCE - 8/31/2008		\$ 5653.82
TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 6/30/2008		\$ 9,765.91

Send change of address to:

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Lyndhurst, VA 22952
Email: pcallo@mbc.edu

Virginia Society of Ornithology Website

<http://virginiabirds.net>

Augusta Bird Club Website

www.augustabirdclub.org