



AUGUSTA
BIRD
C L U B

“There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before.”

~ Robert Lynd

January Meeting

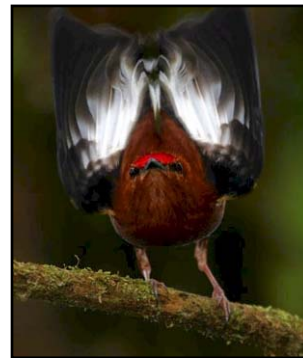
Date: Monday, January 12th, 7:00 PM
Place: AMC Lifetime Building/Blue Ridge Community College Education Center

Program: Social Systems in Manakins –
 Jewels of the Tropical Forest

Speaker: Mercedes S. Foster, Ph.D.
 Research Biologist, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center



Manakins are one of the most colorful and fascinating group of birds that are found throughout the Neotropics. The males lekking courtship rituals can be particularly elaborate and, from a human perspective, quite amusing. Dr. Foster has studied these birds extensively in their natural habitats and will share some of her findings and conclusions with us in a very special program.



Chirps From the President

Welcome to a new year, a year that you may add another bird or birds to your life list. Hopefully every birder keeps a life list. At the last meeting one of our members asked what it means when a birder discovers a life bird, in this case a Snowy Owl. I explained that most birders keep a list of all the birds they have seen over the years and a life bird is a new one to add to that list. For instance Yulee's life list includes sightings of 815 birds. Most birders also keep separate lists of their county, state and their backyard. Yulee's list of Augusta County birds totals 281 out of the total of 307 species identified in the county. Also it is a common practice of many birders to keep a yearly list to see if they can top the number of species seen the year before. John Spahr's list includes birds from all over the world. You will have to ask him about his list. So birders keep listing or start a list and enjoy the excitement of adding a life bird to your list.

Included with this Newsletter is the Code of Birding Ethics that the VSO is asking us to distribute. With the use of new recording techniques to attract birds they are encouraging birders to use caution especially during migration and nesting seasons. I think our birders use proper birding ethics but I encourage you to read the Code so that you are aware of what is appropriate.

-Grant Simmons

Field Trips

Special note -- 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 .

Saturday, Jan. 17th: Highland County
Meeting place / time: Meet at BP station / convenience store in Monterey (junction of US 250 and US 220) at 8:00 AM. Please be prepared to carpool from here.

Coordinator: John Spahr
ispahr@yahoo.com or 887-2345

Join john on this excellent trek though the elevated landscape of Highland County. This trip will make a driving circuit of parts of Highland County, especially the upper Blue Grass Valley. Target birds will include specialties that typically winter in this region, namely Golden Eagles and Rough-legged Hawks. We could even luck into a Northern Goshawk.



We will check out several feeders for Black-capped Chickadees, nuthatches and the like, hoping to see Pine Siskins, Purple Finches, maybe

even Evening Grosbeaks or Red Crossbills. Other birds encountered in past trips have included Ruffed Grouse, Wilson's Snipe and Barred Owl. The trip should conclude by mid afternoon. An optional trip to neighboring Bath County (Lake Moomaw) can be done the following day, Sunday Jan 18 if there is significant interest. If interested in this option, let John know at least one week in advance and consider spending Saturday night in Monterey or the Warm Springs area.

Plan to car-pool. This is mostly a driving trip with multiple stops to view birds; the fewer vehicles the safer and easier it will be. If driving, have a full tank of gas before the start. Bring warm clothes and pack a lunch and snacks.

In case of severe weather the trip will be cancelled and rescheduled for February 7.



REMINDER Crane Creek Magee Marsh Field Trip

Mark your calendars for our upcoming field trip to Magee Marsh Crane Creek.

To recap, we plan to meet in Port Clinton, Ohio (a one day drive from Staunton) on Sunday, May 17. We will stay three nights and leave for Grayling, MI on May 20 (a half day drive from Port Clinton). On the 21st we hope to see the Kirtland's Warbler after which the formal part of our trip will end. As previously stated, all transportation and accommodations are the responsibility of the participants. We would expect that car pooling can be arranged among those who plan to make the trip.

The February Bulletin will have additional information about accommodations and a proposed itinerary as well as other helpful information.

Beth & Harry Lumadue - betharri@comcast.net

It's Time to Renew!

It's that time of year again to renew your membership in the Augusta Bird Club. Please take a few moments to review the form included with last month's newsletter and return it to Ed Lawler. Remember, your dues help make our club activities, publications, and Nature Camp scholarships possible.

Augusta County Christmas Bird Count Summary

Cackling Goose	4
Canada Goose	680
Gadwall	3
American Black Duck	3
Mallard	200
Northern Shoveler	14
Northern Pintail	3
Green-winged Teal	21
Ring-necked Duck	2
Hooded Merganser	1
Ruddy Duck	10
Great Blue Heron (Blue form)	10
Black Vulture	96
Turkey Vulture	571
Northern Harrier	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3
Cooper's Hawk	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk	42
Rough-legged Hawk	2
American Kestrel	42
American Coot	1
Killdeer	15
Wilson's Snipe	1
Rock Pigeon	492
Mourning Dove	440
Barn Owl	2
Eastern Screech-Owl	5
Great Horned Owl	1
Short-eared Owl	1
Belted Kingfisher	8
Red-bellied Woodpecker	40
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4
Downy Woodpecker	27
Hairy Woodpecker	3
Northern Flicker	8
Pileated Woodpecker	10
Eastern Phoebe	3

Blue Jay	185
American Crow	552
Fish Crow	173
Common Raven	2
Horned Lark	27
Carolina Chickadee	121
Tufted Titmouse	72
White-breasted Nuthatch	26
Brown Creeper	1
Carolina Wren	34
Winter Wren	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	13
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3
Eastern Bluebird	224
Hermit Thrush	2
American Robin	165
Northern Mockingbird	139
European Starling	6664
American Pipit	3
Cedar Waxwing	71
Yellow-rumped Warbler	151
Eastern Towhee	4
American Tree Sparrow	3
Chipping Sparrow	1
Field Sparrow	17
Savannah Sparrow	3
Song Sparrow	116
Swamp Sparrow	3
White-throated Sparrow	266
White-crowned Sparrow	71
Dark-eyed Junco	232
Northern Cardinal	167
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1
Red-winged Blackbird	7
Eastern Meadowlark	4
Common Grackle	2
Purple Finch	9
House Finch	246
Pine Siskin	30
American Goldfinch	193
House Sparrow	157



Virginia Society of Ornithology's Principles of Birding Ethics

Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment, and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first.

Code of Birding Ethics

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

- (a) Support the protection of important bird habitat.
- (b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming.

The VSO does not endorse the use of recordings or other artificial lures to attract birds for recreational birding because it has the potential to do harm. Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, especially during peak migration and breeding season, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas, or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area.

Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.

Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

- (c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance minimized, and permission has been obtained from private land-owners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.
- (d) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law, and the rights of others.

- (a) Do not enter private property unless you have obtained the owner's explicit permission. Do not assume that permission extends beyond a specific visit unless the owner says so. Abide by all rules set forth by the land owner. Never post a land-owner's name or property location concerning a sighting unless you have specific permission.
- (b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.
- (c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

- (a) Maintain and clean food, dispensers, water, and nest structures regularly.
- (b) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

Please follow this code and distribute and teach it to others.

The full version of this code is available at the VSO website: www.virginiabirds.net

A Note of Thanks

Dear Augusta County Bird Club.

Hello! I wanted to thank you for the full scholarship that you gave me so that I could attend Nature Camp! It truly was one of the greatest, most wonderful experiences of my entire life. I loved everything, from waking up in the morning to the sound of Reveille, to kneeling on a rock by the creek looking at a salamander, to singing in the LS. I learned so much from the lessons each class taught and even just by being there, almost a part of nature itself.

I was very nervous and afraid of being away from my family and friends for two whole weeks, but right after the evening program, I felt so safe and comfortable there. There is some kind of

magic at Nature Camp that releases you inner self and teaches you how to be who you really are. As soon as I got home I was thinking back to my first day there. I thought about my feelings before and realized that though I was scared to leave my family, I had a whole other family at Nature Camp, a family of, at first, complete strangers!

I think that the combination of taking in all of the knowledge of nature, and having a tremendous amount of fun is really what Nature Camp is all about. I can never, never express in words to you, the appreciation I feel for your giving me the incredible opportunity to embrace everything about Nature Camp.

Sincerely,
Devon Charlier

Augusta Bird Club Minutes December 8th, 2008

The Augusta Bird Club met at 7:00pm on December 8, 2008 at Augusta Medical Center, Fishersville, Virginia. President Grant Simmons welcomed everyone, including new members from Rockbridge County. They are helping with a study on the biology of streams to determine the health of the streams. They promised to share more information at a future meeting.

Allen Lerner reported on the recent trip to Chincoteague, the highlight having been thousands of Snow Geese.

A Snowy Owl has been reported in Albemarle County near Ruckersville. Several Augusta Bird Club members have been to see the owl and for many of them it is a life bird.

John Spahr reported on his trip to Cuba. He saw half of the thirty endemic birds, the most beautiful being the Cuban Trogon. John was working with the Caribbean Conservation Trust and also plans a return trip there.

A Calliope Hummingbird has been coming to a backyard feeder in Lynchburg, Virginia. Members are welcome to visit there to see the bird.

Linda Matkins had an interesting story about a Red-bellied Woodpecker. She had taken the injured bird to the Wildlife Center wrapped in a towel. The bird's tongue which has barbs on it got tangled in the towel's fibers. We learned never to wrap a bird in a towel because of this and to use newspaper instead.

There are no field trips in December; instead, we have the Waynesboro and Augusta County Christmas Bird Counts.

The meeting was adjourned early so that we might enjoy the wonderful holiday goodies and socializing. The Shaw family once again provided entertainment for the group. A very special thanks to them for sharing their talents with us.

-Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Reed, secretary

Send change of address to:

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Email: pcallo@mbc.edu

Virginia Society of Ornithology Website

www.virginiabirds.net

Augusta Bird Club Website

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