



AUGUSTA
BIRD
C L U B

"Birds sing after a storm; why shouldn't people feel as free to delight in whatever remains to them?"

~ Rose Kennedy

March Meeting

Date: Monday, February 8th, 7:00 PM
Place: AMC Lifetime Building/Blue Ridge Community College Education Center
Program: Birds of Korea
Speaker: Peter Nebel

Peter Nebel will present a slide show featuring photos of birds seen during his five years of living in Korea by the Yellow Sea, where 20-foot tides are common. Birds of forest and field will be presented, as well as those of the coastal mud flats. He will also talk about the environment and environmental conservation as practiced in Korea.



Field Trips

Wednesday, March 17th: McCormick's Mill

Meeting Place & Time: Staunton Mall Parking Lot behind McDonald's, 8:30 a.m. or meet at the Mill by 9:00 a.m.

Trip Leader: Jo King, at kingbird10@yahoo.com or 886-3022 or 430-0186

Join Jo King on this early spring walk around the Marl Creek Trail where she hopes to see many returning spring birds. Waterfowl, sparrows, chickadees, kinglets and bluebirds are likely to be identified. Dress for the weather and bring a snack of your liking. The trip will conclude by 11 AM.



WINGBEATS

"Focus" On Birds

The following is a list of what are, for me, the most critical requirements for buying binoculars.

1. **Feel** – Binoculars must immediately feel good and comfortable in your hands. Your finger should automatically fall on the focus wheel - if not, do not buy.
2. **Eye-Relief** – This is the distance between the ocular lens and the eye. It should generally be 16mm to 20mm fully extended to accommodate those who do not wear glasses, and retracted for those who do wear glasses. You **MUST** be able to see through the entire diameter of each barrel, not through a hole in each barrel.
3. **Proper Magnification** – Most birders use binoculars between 7x and 10x. All 10x require a

steady hand and are used generally over greater distances, as well as having a smaller field of view (side to side distance). Those less than 10x I would suggest for beginning birders, those with less experience and also for those of us who do most of our birding in or near woods and our homes.

- 4. Brightness** – For young people the iris of the eye can expand (open) to 6-7mm in low light and for older birders the iris expands to a lesser degree, around 4-5mm; therefore, always divide the smaller number into the larger number. Example: 8x42: 8 into 42 equals 5.25. This number must always be above 4 and up to 6, with most being in the range of 4.2 to 5.25.
- 5. Cost** – You can spend up to \$2,000 for binoculars with excellent optics that allow you to look into dark places and provide focus from edge to edge, but you do not have to. A decent pair of birding binoculars can be purchased for \$200 to \$400, and I would recommend 8x42s.

While the above covers the basics, it is enough to start you “focusing” on birds.

-Walt Childs, President



Southern Boreal Birding Festival

In early June, the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Canaan Valley Resort State Park team up to present a Southern Boreal Birding Festival. Canaan (that's ka'NANE for you recent arrivals to the area) Valley is a high, mountain-rimmed valley just two and a half hours west of us and its balsam fir bogs and spruce forests host a variety of northern breeding birds. Refuge staff and talented volunteers lead trips to varied habitats. Two years ago, we went into an area of the refuge not open to the public, a huge bog area with breeding northern

waterthrushes, blue-headed vireos, rose-breasted grosbeaks and golden-crowned kinglets. That year's festival also featured a canoe trip on the Blackwater River. Last year, we took the chairlift at the Canaan Valley ski area to the top of Canaan Mountain and hiked along the ridge to Bald Ridge for hermit thrushes, red-breasted nuthatches and magnolia warblers.

Various meal and lodging packages are available through the state park or you can just sign up for the festival and arrange housing and meals on your own. The festival information will be on the refuge website at <http://fws.gov/canaan/valley/>; the link is on the left side of the homepage. Since it's largely a volunteer production, website information will not be up for a while, but it's been an event well worth waiting for.

-Mark Gatewood

Birding Big Year Update Tweets from the Trail

The following are taken from John Spahr's Twitter feed as he continues to pursue his Big Year.

February 12th

Drove from Green Valley to Phoenix & back to Tucson today. Got 9 new birds for the year, including Rufous-backed Robin.

Up to 318 birds so far, 9 fewer than Bob. Doubt whether I'll ever catch up. Hope much of the snow is gone when I return to VA in one week.



February 13th

Spotted Owl today. My 12th "lifer" of the trip. I was so pleased I treated Bob to dinner. After all, he found the bird.

February 14th

Another lifer today in AZ, Prairie Falcon. This was followed shortly by a flat tire. The adventure continues.



February 15th

Got skunked today -- no new birds. Got skunked a 2nd time at night driving to our cheap hotel when a skunk crossed our path.

February 16th

Searched for Montezma Quail, to no avail. Lawrence's Goldfinch was a cinch. Bonus bird was Rufous-capped Warbler. Good day. Now in Yuma.



read more Tweets from the Trail at

<https://twitter.com/jnbbigyear2010>

Your traveling birder,
John Spahr
January 19, 2010

Treasurer's Report submitted by Catherine Kohus 1/01/2009 – 1/31/2009

REGULAR OPERATING FUND		
BALANCE - 1/01/2009	\$ 4,600.77	
INCOME	\$ 500.00	
EXPENSES	\$ 111.38	
BALANCE - 1/31/2009		\$ 4,989.39
EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND		
BALANCE - 1/01/2009	\$ 7,381.00	
INCOME	\$ 469.15	
EXPENSES	\$ 0.00	
BALANCE - 1/31/2009		\$ 7,850.15
TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 1/31/2009		\$ 12,839.54

Bird Quiz!

Can you identify the bird below?



The answer will be revealed in next month's newsletter. Happy guessing!

Last Month: Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*)