



AUGUSTA
BIRD
C L U B

*"Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it,
and if I were a bird I would fly about the earth seeking the successive autumns."*

~ George Eliot

September Meeting

Date: Monday, September 13th, 7:00 PM
Place: AMC Lifetime Building/Blue Ridge Community College Education Center, Room 215-216
Program: Managing for Early Successional Bird Species on Private Lands
Speaker: Kenneth Kesson, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist

Ken will be presenting information for homeowners on how to manage for early successional bird species on private lands. Ken works for the State of Virginia and is also affiliated with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The presentation will be both informative and educational in nature and should last about 45 minutes. Attendees will learn about select early successional bird species and will also be presented with simple to advanced habitat management techniques that can be applied on their lands to enhance these species' survival.

Those of us who live with the Poague Run Watershed (an area lying mostly within the northern boundaries of Staunton) recently received a newsletter from the Shenandoah Resource Conservation and Development Council. One article in it told of a local landowner who planted warm-season grasses



and native shrubs on her property, and -- as a result of those efforts -- has seen the almost-rare Northern Bobwhite now for two years in a row. We can make a difference. If you want to improve the chances of Bobwhites, Chats, Grasshopper Sparrows and other declining species successfully thriving on your property, come to hear what Ken has to say!

Field Trips

Saturday September 11th: Rockfish Valley
Meeting Place & Time: Nellysford Shopping Center (on Route 151) at 8:30 AM near the north end of the parking lot near the Pharmacy.
Coordinators: Walt Childs & Allen Lerner

Will be looking for some warblers, vireos, flycatchers and sparrows. Walking will be EASY, along stream and through grassy fields (may be wet), and wood edges. Canceled if raining. The trip should be over by noon, however, you might want to bring some snacks just in case. Contact Walt (434-361-1626) or Allen (birdergonewild@yahoo.com) for more information.

Wednesday, September 15th: 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.
Coordinator: Jo King.

Join Jo for a leisurely walk around the Marl Creek Trail where she hopes to find many migrating War-

blers, shorebirds, waterfowl and bluebirds that are likely to be there. Wouldn't it be fun to add a new species to the checklist? Dress for the weather and bring a snack of your liking. The trip will conclude by 11 a.m. Contact Jo at kingbird10@yahoo.com or 886-3022, or 430-0186 for more information.

Saturday & Sunday September 18th & 19th:

Humpback Rocks Visitor Center

Meeting Place & Time: Humpback Rocks Visitor Center at 8am

Coordinator: Allen Lerner

Join Allen Lerner & the Staff of Humpback Rocks Visitors Center for a walk around the Visitors Center up to the Humpback Rocks Parking lot & back. We will be looking for migrating Warblers, Flycatchers, Vireos, and much more. Hopefully we will encounter wintering Sparrows and Kinglets on this 1½ to 2 hr walk. Dress for the weather and bring snacks. For more info contact Allen at birdergonewild@yahoo.com.

Saturday, October 9th: Swoope & Augusta Wetlands

Meeting Place & Time: Staunton Big Lots parking lot at 8:00am for car pooling

Coordinator: Allen Lerner

Join Allen on this half day adventure through the open fields and ponds of the Swoope area and finish up at the Augusta Wetlands. We will be looking for Sparrows, late Warblers, Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatches, any migrating Geese and Ducks, as well as Grebes and Loons. This event is RAIN or SHINE. Contact Allen for more info birdergonewild@yahoo.com

WINGBEATS

Arizona & New Mexico's High Country

Nancy and I have just returned from visiting family in Gilbert, AZ, a suburb of Phoenix. It was very hot - 109+ - and this suppresses the desire to bird, although there were a few birds about.

The prizes were our stops on the way to and in AZ. The first being a visit to Sandia Crest, just outside Albuquerque, NM at 10,700' elevation. This

brief stop produced Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Rufous Hummingbirds, Yellow-rumped Warblers (Audubon's), Green-tailed Towhees, Juncos (Gray-headed race), Red Crossbills (a life bird for me), American Robins, Mountain Chickadees, Warbling Vireos, and Steller's Jays. For those of you who are hard core birders, this is the place during winter where you can drink tea and enjoy a scone while viewing all three species of Rosy-Finches plus the Hepburn's Rosy-Finch at no more than 10'-30' away.

Before arriving in the Phoenix area, we spent a week in Pinetop/Lakeside, AZ area at 7,000'-10,000' on the Mongollen (Muggy-on) Rim for cooler temps and more birding. While enjoying the cooler temperatures (and even a couple of hail storms which completely covered the forest floor), we saw 67 species. The following are noted since most are found at higher elevations:



Band-tailed Pigeon, Pygmy Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadee, Black-headed Grosbeak, Calliope, Rufous, Black-chinned and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Hairy, Acorn, Lewis's and Three-toed (a life bird for me) Woodpeckers, Red-naped & Williamson's Sapsuckers, Northern Flicker, Western & Mountain Bluebirds, Western Wood-Pewee, Common Yellowthroat, Black-throated Gray, Red-faced, and Virginia Warblers, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Violet-green Swallow, Golden Eagle and Clark's Nutcracker (another life bird for me).

A major benefit of this time of year (late July and early August) in the higher elevations is the fantastic display of wildflowers which provided constant enjoyment with their rainbow of colors. Rufous, Broad-tailed and a few Calliopes were attracted to them as well.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the first meeting of Augusta Bird Club on September 13 at 7 o'clock and I am also looking forward to hearing about YOUR recent sightings and summer travels.

-Walt Childs, President

Seeds for the Birds

We are approaching the time for our fall Bird Seed Sale. I have made contact with our supplier from last year and he is eager to provide all the seed you can feed to your favorite birds this coming winter. He thinks prices will be similar to last year with Sunflowers being harvested later this month.

We are anticipating partnering with the students at Mary Baldwin College who did the hard work last year. Projected dates are for you to receive your order blank by the end of this month with orders due back by October 9th and pickup October 23rd. It is not too early to begin planning now on how much and what kind of seed you would like to have and the Club will gladly provide it. As you know we use most of the proceeds to provide scholarships for students to Nature Camp.

- Grant Simmons

The Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch 35 Years and Counting!



Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch
Est. 1976

History tells us that on a September day in 1976, a small group of bird watching friends that included Yulee Lerner, John and Mozelle Henkle, and Isabelle Obershein, met at the former Holiday Inn lookout parking lot atop Afton Mountain overlooking Rockfish Gap and within a few short hours, they had tallied 9 species totaling 765 raptors. With their continued efforts and that of the many dedicated volunteers over the next 35 years, Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch is now recognized as a premier hawk watching site.

I recently learned that five golden eagles were trapped and fitted with transmitters this past winter. One capture was in Highland Co. and four at Clinch Mountain WMA. Jeff Cooper, a raptor biologist with the Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries, re-

ported one of the captured goldens near Winchester went south along the Blue Ridge when the heavy snows hit, and it spent a significant amount of time at Rockfish Gap. There are currently plans to out-fit 10-15 more goldens this year.

Looking to the future, there have been discussions on the feasibility in setting up a banding station at Rockfish Gap. This endeavor will require dedicated volunteers to assist in the monitoring and banding operations. At the present time, we are seeking individuals to help in monitoring bait stations (i.e., checking trail cams for eagle activity). We also continue to actively seek volunteer counters to man the hawk watch during the fall season.

If you are interested in helping, please contact me by email (brenda@birdsofvirginia.com) or cell phone (434) 962-4936.

Speaking on behalf of Vic Laubach and myself, we hope you can join us this season at Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch.

- Brenda Tekin

Birds of Augusta County **Donated to Area Schools**

Earlier this year, the Augusta Bird Club (ABC) board decided to donate our publication, *The Birds of Augusta County* to all the area schools as a part of our club's educational mission. "All the area schools" means every public and private school in Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro; special schools such as the Governor's School; and two colleges, Mary Baldwin College (MBC) and Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC).

Toward that end, I put together a committee composed of former and current area teachers: Marietta Beverage, Bill Corwin, Chipper Cullen, and Betty Gatewood. That was a stroke of genius because they all had wonderful contacts, Marietta and Betty with Augusta County and Staunton and Bill and Chipper with Waynesboro. (My contacts consisted of two grandchildren at Westwood Elementary School in Waynesboro.)

Marietta, Betty, and I started in June with our one and only meeting over lunch at Stone Soup Books and then went to work making contacts and delivering the books. Professor Tamra Willis at MBC who was planning to teach a short course, Natural Science, in early August immediately asked for twelve books for her class. Our publication, I am proud to write, is considered to be one of the best summaries of birdlife in a Virginia county. It is a prime example of citizen science and longitudinal research. I attribute that excellence to our expert

and dedicated birders (both past and present) and our knowledgeable and careful Records Chair, Yu-Lee Lerner. Most of us have heard the oft-quoted phrase of YuLee's, "Are you sure?"

YuLee went with me to present *The Birds of Augusta County* to Blue Ridge Community College. President John Downey, vice-president of instruction, Lloyd Meadows, and college librarian, Connie Medaris met with us to hear about the book. The News Virginian carried the story and I will have multiple copies at the September meeting (along with some books to sell for \$15.75.)



To date we have delivered eighty-three books and have some special schools and private schools still on our list. I told the three public School Boards about our donation on the 9th (Staunton), 10th (Waynesboro), and 12th (Augusta County) of August, and they were quite appreciative as were the representatives of the other schools. By the time we are done, we will have delivered over a 100 books to our area schools. This donation is a good way to get our young people as well as their teachers out in the woods and interested in birds and fulfill our educational mission.

- Mary Vermeulen

Eastern Shore Birding & Wildlife Festival

Registration is now open for the Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival at www.esvafestivals.com. For the first time this year's registrants can register and select their trips entirely online! For those who prefer to send in a registration by mail this option is still available and a schedule can be downloaded from the festival website. The website is loaded with good festival information including a full schedule and all trip descriptions. You can follow us on Facebook too! www.hs.facebook.com/ESVAFestivals

This year's keynote address "State of Virginia's Birds" will be given by Dr. Greg Butcher, Director of Bird Conservation for the National Audubon Society. The festival will happen Oct 7th-10th. The festivities will kick off on Thursday in Onancock and then move to Cape Charles for the weekend. Join us for one of the migration hot spots of the East Coast as songbirds, raptors and shorebirds funnel down the Delmarva Peninsula. In addition to stunning natural beauty you can soak in the charm of the farms and villages of the Eastern Shore as well as some of the tastiest seafood to be found anywhere!

16th Annual Kiptopeke Challenge

Fall migration is on, which means it is time for the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory's **16th Annual Kiptopeke Challenge**, set for Saturday, **September 25, 2010**.

This event alone provides a significant portion of the CVWO's operating budget and helps to ensure that research and educational programs like Songbird Banding, Monarch Butterfly Tagging and the Hawk Watch continue at First Landing SP, Kiptopeke SP and the Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR. Through your previous participation and fundraising in the KC, you helped to ensure the continuing success of the CVWO and its steadfast commitment to avian research, habitat conservation and public education - THANK YOU!

The team of Allen Lerner, Ed & Nancy Lawler, & Janice Frye from the Richmond Bird Club (Augusta Bald Eagles) will be flying high during the 24 hr. venue of the Kiptopeke Challenge this year. We will see how many species of birds we can find and identify in 24hrs and the travel area is from Island one to Chincoteague. Last year we took second place & the year before took first place in this event. Anyone who wishes to make a contribution to support the Augusta Bald Eagles can make their checks out to the CVWO & send them directly to the CVWO (go to their web site) or send the check to me (Allen Lerner, 1362 New Hope Rd., Staunton, VA 24401). For more info on the Kiptopeke Challenge go to www.cvwo.org

We Want YOU!

We are in need of those willing to Chair the following Committees:

Education

The focus is mostly on the promoting of birding to local youth and identifying candidates for Nature Camp scholarships.

Membership

Maintain membership cards and provide information for new and prospective members.

Nominating

To obtain a slate of officers to be presented to the membership in the spring.

Records

Maintain records of birds in Augusta County.

Please contact Walt Childs at 434-361-1626 or wchild@verizon.net for more details.

- Walt Childs, President

Treasurer's Report

submitted by Catherine Kohus
4/01/2010 – 8/01/2010

| REGULAR OPERATING FUND | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| BALANCE - 4/01/2010 | \$ 5,629.57 | |
| INCOME | \$ 280.76 | |
| EXPENSES | \$ 84.06 | |
| BALANCE - 8/01/2010 | | \$5,826.27 |
| EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND | | |
| BALANCE - 4/01/2010 | \$ 7,771.15 | |
| INCOME | \$ 85.00 | |
| EXPENSES | \$ 1,850.00 | |
| BALANCE - 8/01/2010 | | \$ 6006.15 |
| TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 8/01/2010 | | \$ 11,832.42 |

Bird Quiz!

Can you identify the bird below?



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

Virginia Society of Ornithology Website

virginiabirds.net

Augusta Bird Club Website

www.augustabirdclub.org

