



AUGUSTA
BIRD
C L U B

"The little birds have God for their caterer."

~ Miguel de Cervantes

October Meeting

Date: Monday, October 11th, 7:00 PM
Place: AMC Lifetime Building/Blue Ridge Community College Education Center, Room 215-216
Program: Birding in Australia
Speaker: Richard Kiefer, Retired Professor, College of William & Mary

On a first trip to Australia, a birder begins seeing life birds almost immediately. The birdlife is diverse and in many cases unique to the country. Over 750 bird species have been identified in Australia and the surrounding ocean over the continental shelf. Some birds which we unfortunately see in pet stores are native to Australia. For example, the beautiful sulfur-crested



cockatoo can be seen and heard even in large cities.

This presentation is based on the year that Dr. Kiefer and his wife, Sharon, lived in Australia (1993-94) and on a recent trip there in early December 2009. Most of their travels were along the east coast and into the center of the country. The talk has been titled "Some Birds of Australia" to emphasize the fact that the number of birds seen during those visits barely scratches the surface of Australia's birds.

However, it is hoped that the talk will whet the appetite for those who have never been there or rekindle fond memories for those have, and be enjoyable to those that just appreciate the diversity of birds throughout the world.

Field Trips

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

Saturday, October 30th: Cannon Hill, Mary Baldwin College, Staunton

Meeting Place & Time: Under the flag pole at the highest point on campus, 8:30 a.m

Coordinators: Bruce Dorries & Crista Cabe

We'll take a one-hour tour of the upper campus to learn how the college will manage approximately eight acres of property, converting lawn -- fescue grass -- to plant species that will support early successional bird species and butterflies. The college, working with ABC and other partners, is employing some of the lessons learned from Private Lands Wildlife Biologist Ken Kesson, who gave a talk at the September ABC meeting, as well as from green guru Bobby Whitescarver with the NRCS. We will discuss what the club might do to help MBC bring more birds to this urban setting, which over three years will be converted from a relatively sterile site to an outdoor lab for the larger community that will also serve as a destination for tourists, and a small reserve for wildlife.

November 19th – 21st: Eastern Shore / Chincoteague

Coordinator: Dave Hogg

Join Dave Hogg and folks with the Monticello Bird Club for a weekend trip to the Eastern Shore and Chincoteague Island that will include a guided tour on the CBBT islands. The CBBT guided portion of the trip will be on Friday morning and is limited to 15 with **prior submission of a registration form for security clearance**. We will meet in the south end of the CBBT in the administration building parking lot by no later than 9:45 a.m. on Friday, November 19. The \$50/hr fee will be divided equally among the participants which usually averages a little under \$10 per person. Participants must also present a picture ID (e.g. driver's license) to the security officer. Lodging will be on Chincoteague Island and reservations can be made at the Island Motor Inn (757-336-3141). Mention you are with the Monticello or Augusta Bird Club to receive the group rate. Please note there is a 7-day prior cancellation limit. Contact Dave Hogg for the CBBT registration form and additional information at dhogg@nrao.edu.

WINGBEATS

Birds & Seeds

As I write this (the first day of fall), the hummingbirds are still stopping by to re-fuel on their long migratory journey to Central and South America.

In addition, tens of thousands of Broad-winged Hawks have been observed on their way south. On this record breaking day over 7,000 were counted and so far the month of September has over 31,000. These numbers are record setting and have pleased everyone who has participated in the Hawk Watch. It is a sight that most don't know we have in our own back yard.

A number of confusing fall warblers has been seen and photographed in recent weeks and shared via the List Serve. For me, the photos allow discussions to flow leading to identification and reinforcement of individual bird characteristics.



On September 25 Allen Lerner, Ed and Nancy Lawler will be participating in the Kiptopeke Challenge as the "Augusta Bald Eagles" in support of the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. Please consider supporting by donating an amount per species seen or make a donation to CVWO, PO Box 1255, Virginia Beach, VA 23451.

Also, something that is special to me is participating with the Rockingham Bird Club in the banding of Saw-whet Owls in late October to early November. A great opportunity for some hands on experience. Consider marking your calendar for an evening of banding and scientific discovery. Call me, 434-361-1626, if you are interested.

Don't forget our SEED SALE. Online orders are now being accepted at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/abcseedssale/>

in addition to mail in orders.

-Walt Childs, President

Annual Seed Sale Begins

This is the month to dig out your bird feeders and plan what seeds you need to entice birds to your feeders this winter. Hopefully you have the order form that was prepared for us by Steve

Grande and the MBC students with the help of Crista Cabe. If not you can go to our Web site and get a copy or we will have them at the October meeting. You can also order online at <https://sites.google.com/site/abcseedsale/>. Please note that this year you will have the opportunity to purchase two sizes of Squirrel Buster feeders. Also we will have available suet cakes that you can order in quantities of six.

Please check if you want your seeds delivered. If you have a pick-up or van and can help deliver we can use your help. We will need volunteers on the day of the pick up so let me, Linda Matkins, or Crista know if you can help out. Note that if you forget to pick up your seeds there will be a charge to store and deliver them later.

Our seeds are coming from a company in Ohio called Lizzie Mae and are prepared by Amish farmers. Our agent is Rob Martin who has served us for a number of years. They will be delivering only once so plan to order enough to survive a 20" snow (hopefully not).

- Grant Simmons

Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch Roundup

Many of you have probably read or heard about this season's spectacular flights of Broad-winged Hawks over Rockfish Gap. Some have been fortunate to have witnessed hundreds and even thousands as they make their annual fall trek to their wintering grounds in South America. Just when we thought the last "big push" had moved through, KABANG, another 7,000+ in one day were counted on Sept. 23, pushing the season total to 31,953 and



setting a new record in the 35 year history of Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch. Although the Broad-wing flights should be winding down, the season continues until mid-November. The Sharp-shinned

Hawks are beginning to stir and the current Bald Eagle count sits at 87, just one shy of tying the current record and we're confident that a new record will be set by the time this newsletter is distributed. The success of the hawk watch is contingent on its dedicated volunteers and we ask that you consider helping us out, even if for a few hours a week. For more information, check out the web site – www.rockfishgaphawkwatch.org.

– Brenda Tekin and Vic Laubach

Thanks From The Educational Community

Since the beginning of the distribution of *Birds of Augusta County*, I have received many thanks from our educational community. Of course all the county superintendents and school board chairs thanked me at the school board meetings, but Dr. Chuck Bishop of Augusta County sent me a handwritten and hand-addressed note of thanks. Dr. Robin Crowder and the Waynesboro School Board thanked us with a special pen and a hand shake from each of the board members. The home schooler Mom that Marietta contacted immediately wanted a book of her own. In addition, Marietta has agreed to give a talk on the *Birds of Augusta County* to their October meeting. Mr. Allen Beiler, school board member for the Mennonite schools in Stuarts Draft eagerly accepted the book—he is a birder and recognized its value. YuLee received a thank-you email from the Stuarts Draft librarian. BRCC President John Downey included the vice-president of instruction and the librarian in a meeting with YuLee and me. Dr. Downey wrote a wonderful blog to the BRCC community about the donation. Vice President Lloyd Meadows, who had just started feeding birds in his backyard, could hardly keep his hands off of the publication. Finally, we had a huge compliment from Prof. Tamra Willis (MBC) who used our book in her short course, Natural Science, this past August.

In addition, I have received emails, portions of which I would like to share with all of you. Here are some excerpts:

From Lisa Shifflett, Curriculum Supervisor, Augusta County:

Thank you so much for coming to our media specialists "back-to-school" session on August 12 and sharing two copies of Birds of Augusta County with each of our libraries. I understand there has already been

some interest the book! We appreciate your generosity – please express our gratitude with the other members of the Augusta Bird Club.

From Amanda Seldomridge, Buffalo Gap H.S. librarian:

I would like to thank you for the two copies of Birds of Augusta County that you donated to Buffalo Gap High School's media center. Too anxious to wait, several teachers took the books off my desk and browsed through them before I even had a chance to catalog them. This tells me that the books will continue to create interest and inspire learning, in both teachers and students, for a good long time. Again, thank you for supporting our educational efforts!

Our publication is being appreciated and, I hope, used.

- Mary Vermeulen

CVWO American Woodcock Trophy Comes Back to the Valley!



The Kiptopeke Challenge, an annual team birding competition and fund-raising event sponsored by the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, was held on Saturday, October 25. The teams compete to identify the greatest number of bird species in a day within the land, ocean and bay areas of Accomack and Northampton Counties. This basically covers the area from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

This year, the Augusta Bald Eagles, a local team comprised of Allen Larner, Nancy and Ed Lawler, and their friend Janice Frye, were the winning team. The cast bronze American Woodcock trophy is coming back to the valley.

Having relinquished the trophy to another team last year by a count of 3 birds, the team resolved to work harder. Thursday and Friday were spent scouting out the territory, mapping out what would hopefully be a productive route, and honing skills on shorebird identifications (we don't get many of those here in the mountains). On the day of the competition, the team was on the job by 3:00 AM, with the Eastern Screech-Owl and Great Horned Owl being ticked off by 3:30, with several rails shortly thereafter. Seventeen windy and unseasonally hot hours later, the species count stood at 125 – 9 birds ahead of the next closest team. Hard work does sometimes pay off.

The Augusta Bald Eagles would like to thank those that sponsored the effort with their donations to the CVWO.

Middle River Clean Up

Columbus Day, for the first time, dozens of volunteers will put canoes on the Middle River to pull tires and other trash from the county's longest stream. Friends of Middle River will meet at the Verona office of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries at 9 a.m. Contact Paul Bugas, with DGIF, 540-248-9360, rbugas@gmail.com, or David Fuller with Friends of the Middle River: riverviewfullers@gmail.com for more information on this important event.

Walt welcomed two guests, Craig and DeeAnn.

Jo announced there would be a field trip to McCormick's on Wednesday, September 15th.

March Meeting Minutes

The Augusta Bird Club met at 7:00 pm on September 13th, 2010 at the AMC Lifetime Building/Blue Ridge Community College Education Center, Fishersville, Va. The meeting was called to order by President Walt Childs.

Walt welcomed two guests, Craig and DeeAnn.

Jo announced there would be a field trip to McCormick's on Wednesday, September 15th.

Allen and Walt co-led a trip to Nellysford to the Rockfish Valley Nature Trail and that 11 ABC members participated and it turned out well with a tally of 33 species. Birder's World highlighted this

trail in the September issue. Plans are to return in mid-October.

Allen, Nancy and Ed are participating in the Kiptopeke Big Day with birding beginning at 3:00 a.m. and going until 9:00 p.m. They hope to reclaim the trophy this year. Tax deductible sponsorships are requested in the name of Augusta Bald Eagles, payable to the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory.

A White-cheeked Pintail has been seen in the Chincoteague area. Harry and Beth were able to see the Pintail.

Walt announced that close to \$12,000 was given to the club from Dorthea Ship's estate.

The Constitution and Bylaws Ad-hoc Committee (Allen, Grant, Ed and Walt) have made recommended changes to the Bylaws and ask that everyone review the Bylaws for a vote at the October meeting.

Grant gave a report on this year's seed sale, the major fundraiser for the club and Crista handed out forms. The prices are the same as last year and suet cakes and an anti-squirrel bird feeder have been added. On-line ordering will be available. Orders are due by October 11 with a pick up date of October 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Augusta County Government Center. Linda will check on the pick-up site.

Walt said that Bruce Dorries had welcomed the board at his house for the recent board meeting and gave a presentation on the Meadow Project. A project that will take eight acres of fescue on the MBC campus and plant native grasses. Bruce also agreed to chair the club's conservation committee.

Crista will lead a walk on October 30, 8:00 a.m., beginning at MBC's Cannon Hill which is the first plot of native grasses for the Meadow Project and viewing other areas designated to be part of the project.

Walt is looking for chairs for the Education, Membership, Nominating and Records committees.

John Spahr gave an update on his "Big Year" noting that he has 684 birds and Bob Ake has 700. Ed has asked John to give a program on this activity.

The evening's very informative presentation was given by Ken Kesson, Private Lands Biologist with the state of Virginia on "Managing for Early Successional Bird Species on Private Lands." With a series of photos accompanying his talk, Ken spoke on developing habitat for a cross section of bird species by providing areas for: 1) good nesting by using warm grass/native grasses, 2) brood rearing, e.g. old sunflower and corn patches, 3) heavy cover for seeking refuge from heat during the day and

from predators, e.g. briar patches. The talk also focused on restoring shrublands and grasslands by eliminating fescue, Bermuda grass, Johnson grass and controlling woody invasive plants such as Autumn Olive, Buckthorn, Multiflora, etc., selecting species that produce secondary benefits (food and beauty), preparing a seed bed with suggestions of when and how often to mow and maintenance. Prairie restoration was discussed and managing woodlands with active timber harvest to open up the canopy and other suggested practices such as leaving a strip of corn or soy as a buffer and fencing cattle out of woods. Ken noted that the state of Virginia has recovery plan monies available and encouraged individuals to call to receive assistance in developing an action plan. Additional opportunities are available with VA Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the USFWS Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration.

- Respectfully submitted, Penny Warren
Secretary

Treasurer's Report
submitted by Catherine Kohus
8/01/2010 – 8/31/2010

REGULAR OPERATING FUND		
BALANCE - 8/01/2010	\$ 5,826.27	
INCOME	\$ 2.51	
EXPENSES	\$ 84.06	
BALANCE - 8/31/2010		\$5,828.78
EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND		
BALANCE - 8/01/2010	\$ 6,006.15	
INCOME		
EXPENSES		
BALANCE - 8/31/2010		\$ 6006.15
TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 8/31/2010		\$ 11,834.93

Bird Quiz!

Can you identify the bird below?

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



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Last Month: Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*)

Welcome New Members!

Lucille Staton

Sam & Sandy Lyon

Virginia Society of Ornithology Website

virginiabirds.net

Augusta Bird Club Website

www.augustabirdclub.org