



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

### October Meeting

**Date:** Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM  
**Place:** AMC Lifetime Building/Blue Ridge  
Community College Education Center

**Program:** Saw Whet Migration  
**Speaker:** A. Clair Mellinger

A. Clair Mellinger, of Eastern Mennonite University, will present a talk on his work banding migrating Saw Whet Owls. It is truly surprising the numbers of owls he is able to capture and band. Equally interesting are the results of the banded birds being seen again. Come to this month's program to learn more about these enigmatic owls!



### Field Trips

**Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup>:** Licking Hole Creek, Crozet  
**Meeting Place and Time:** Afton Inn/Hawk Watch  
parking lot, 8:00 AM  
**Coordinator:** Penny Warren  
[penny@staunton.com](mailto:penny@staunton.com)

We will venture to Crozet for a morning trip and visit Licking Hole Creek. A fairly well maintained and

easy trail that goes along the creek, with fields and wooded areas opening up to a large pond. The trail offers a variety of mixed, wonderful habitats. We will be looking for a variety of birds and water fowl and depending on water levels, mud flats may exist which could offer some good shore bird sightings.

**Sunday, Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>:** Swoope & Augusta Wetlands  
**Meeting Place & Time:** Staunton Big Lots parking  
lot, 8:00 AM  
**Coordinator:** Allen Lerner at [larneysky@mindspring.com](mailto:larneysky@mindspring.com) or 280-3423

Join Allen Lerner on this half day adventure thru the open fields and ponds of the Swoope area and the mixed forest, marshy areas of the Wetlands. We will be looking for any late migrants as well as for any wintering birds. Our target birds will be Kinglets, Waterfowl, and Sparrows of any kind. Dress for the weather that day & bring snacks.

**Wednesday, Oct 12<sup>th</sup>:** McCormick's Mill  
**Meeting Place & Time:** McDonalds Parking lot at  
the Staunton Mall at 8:30 AM  
**Coordinator:** Jo King at [kingbird10@yahoo.com](mailto:kingbird10@yahoo.com)  
or 886-3022 or 430-0186

Enjoy an early fall morning with Jo King to this beautiful place in the southern corner of Augusta County in hopes of finding many migrating and resident birds. We will be looking for waterfowl, warblers and sparrows. Come along for the half day. Dress for the weather and bring a snack.

**Saturday, Oct 15<sup>th</sup>:** Black Rock Springs, Shenandoah National Park

Meeting place: @ 8:00 AM

**Meeting Place & Time:** Afton Inn Parking lot at 8:00 AM

**Coordinator:** Lisa Hamilton

A leisurely stroll down Black Rock Springs trail to the site of a former hot springs resort. If time permits we may venture a short distance on to Paine Run, lovely small rushing stream. Possible sightings include late fall migrants, fall wildflowers and mushrooms. Black bear have been sighted on previous excursions. Meet at the Hawk watch parking area at the Inn at Afton @ 8:00 AM. Carpooling recommended. Any one holding park and/or Golden Age passes should be sure and bring them otherwise a fee will be charged for each vehicle entering the park.

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**Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>:** Springdale Water Gardens

**Meeting Place and Time:** Staunton Mall at 8:00 or 8:30 at Springdale Gardens

**Coordinator:** Penny Warren, [penny@staunton.com](mailto:penny@staunton.com)

Tish Folsom has offered her beautiful Springdale Water Gardens setting for the club to explore for the morning. The variety of habitat of woods and open pastures could provide some great October birding.

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## The President's Perch

### On the Move

*"Bird migration is the one truly unifying natural phenomenon in the world, stitching the continents together in a way that even the great weather systems, which roar out from the poles but fizzle at the equator, fail to do. It is an enormously complex subject, perhaps the most compelling drama in all of natural history." ....*

From "Living on the Wind; Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds"

As of this date of writing my column, we have had another great September at the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch under many watchful eyes of great volunteers. I have looked forward to each even-

ing's e-mail to see the day's report and to learn just how many hundred or thousands of Broad-winged Hawks came through for the day. I still remember, and believe I will always remember, the first time I saw a kettle of 3,000-4,000 BWs at our local hawk watch. It was such an awe-inspiring, sensational, exhilarating, magical experience. I have not seen any huge kettles of the Broad-winged Hawks this September but I saw enough large groups, 200 or so, that it made me have many of the initial feelings and especially that magical quality of how they appear to be coming from behind some hidden curtain in the sky. It is an incredible sight.



It is a wonderful season to stop and think about why birds do what they do, going from point A to B with many stops in between on their long voyages and many September sightings on Bell's Lane have given me pause. I have been fortunate to catch glimpses of those confusing migrating Warblers coming through and other birds such as Tanagers, Grosbeaks, etc., adorned in their fall plumage ...always a challenge for me to identify and prompting me to send many e-mails to Allen asking for identification help!!! And then one day, I caught sight of a group (30+-) of Bobolinks. Upon returning home, I first had to look up what a group of Bobolinks is called and found out that it is called a 'chain' and also discovered other names for Bobolinks, those being Rice bird, Meadow-wink (my favorite), Reed bird, Skunk Blackbird and unfortunately Butter bird. I say unfortunate as I came to learn they are used as a food source in some areas. I continued to read about their migration and learned they can travel up to 1,000 miles in one day and upwards of 6,000 miles to their destinations of Brazil, Paraguay or northern Argentina and they

weigh in at a mere 1.7 ounces! Not that this makes them the smallest bird or traveling the farthest but it still is an impressive feat. And even though Bobolinks can be seen here at other times of the year, how special that they stopped on Bell's Lane in September for a day or evening's respite on their wondrous journey.

*"There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of the birds. .... There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter."* - Rachel Carson

When I read reflections on any number of aspects of birds and their amazing lives and accomplishments, I know why I became a birder!

Enjoy the fall migrating season!

-Penny Warren, President

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## BIRD SEED SALE 2011

**Order deadline October 15**

**Pick up October 22 at the Augusta Government Center, Verona**

One of the joys of winter is watching a variety of resident and migratory birds feeding outside your window. The Augusta Bird Club's annual seed sale is the perfect opportunity to stock up on new crop, premium quality seed to feed all those Goldfinches, Chickadees, Titmice, Nuthatches, Woodpeckers, Wrens, Doves, and Sparrows – not to mention rarer winter visitors. (We left out Starlings, Grackles, and Jays, as at least some bird club members would prefer they ate elsewhere.) By purchasing your supply of seed from the bird club, you also help to send kids to Nature Camp and support a variety of important education and conservation projects. So order now!

Once again you may order online at <https://sites.google.com/site/abcseedsale>. If you have questions or would like additional copies of the flyer to share with friends, email [abcseed-sale@gmail.com](mailto:abcseed-sale@gmail.com) or call Grant Simmons at 540-337-0471.

**A note about pricing:** Scarcity of sunflower seeds and peanuts this year, combined with higher de-

mand internationally (especially China), have driven up commodity prices, as noted in a recent news story by National Public Radio. This year's whole-



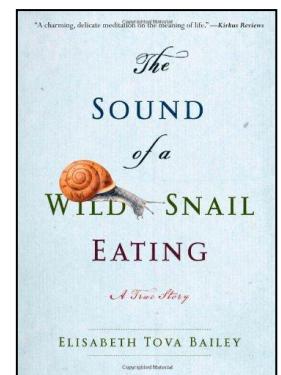
sale prices are higher for many items than last year's retail prices. As local vendors sell out of last year's crop of sunflower seed and start selling new crop, you'll see the higher prices reflected in stores, and we are already seeing much higher prices with online sellers of premium quality bird seed. Grant has worked hard to investigate options and negotiate the best possible prices while insisting on high quality. We have significantly reduced our margin on sunflower seeds to lessen the impact on you. Our prices are especially competitive prices for suet cakes, Squirrel Buster feeders, nyjer (thistle), peanuts, and premium mixed seed.

- Grant Simmons & Crista Cabe

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## The Naturalist's Book Nook

I recently read "The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating" by Elizabeth Tova Bailey. Bailey was stricken with an undefined, undiagnosed illness and was left bedridden and confined most of the day and night. A friend brings her a potted violet and a little snail along with the plant. Bailey becomes very intrigued and ultimately attached to the little creature. She researches, reads and learns about snails and writes and reflects on this Lilliputian world that she has entered and therein the meaning of her life, the snail's life and the connections that emerge. All in all it is a lovely, sweet book. About halfway through the book, I found myself reading at a much slower, more enjoyable snail's pace! If you do not read the book, visiting her website ([elizabethtovabailey.com](http://elizabethtovabailey.com)) may



be worth a few minutes of your time and you can watch a four and half minute video of “the best book trailer of the year.”

Have you read a wonderful book that you would consider sharing in the club’s newsletter?

- Penny Warren

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## Birding and Traveling

If you have never been to the Dakotas, you have missed some great birding and sight-seeing. Almost eleven-year-old Caroline, my grand-daughter, and I took a train to see my friend, Laura, who lives in the Black Hills of South Dakota. At the Waubay National Wildlife Refuge in the northeast corner of South Dakota, a part of the prairie pothole region, we found Yellow Warblers, Barn Swallows, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, American Robins, Double-crested Cormorants, and large flocks of White Pelicans. If it were not so flooded, we may have also seen more of the 244 species on their checklist. Only the main road to the visitor center was clear of water. We were able to walk to the 110-foot observation tower overlooking a small



lake, but there was fog over the lake. Still, I was able to spot the warblers, swallows, and robins while my granddaughter and my limber friend climbed to the third level of the tower. This 4,650 acre-refuge has the largest duck production area in the United States. Birding on the Refuge is best during the spring (March-April) and fall (October-November) when peak waterfowl numbers occur. Spring and fall migrations of warblers and shorebirds occur in May and September. One of the primary reasons birders visit this Refuge is to see the Red-necked Grebe. Waubay is the southern-most location where these grebes nest. By the way

“Waubay” in the Sioux Indian language means “a nesting place for birds.” The Dakota grasslands are full of songbirds and the marshes are full of shore-



birds in nesting season.

We drove south to another birding hotspot, Lake Thompson, known as “Twin Lakes” in *By the Shoes of Silver Lake and The Long Winter* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Caroline thoroughly enjoyed visiting the Laura Ingalls Wilder site in DeSmet, about fourteen miles north of Lake Thompson. My friend Laura grew up in this area where her Norwegian great-grandfather homesteaded in this prairie potholes region of southeastern South Dakota. It is the area covered most recently by glaciers and is where wetlands occur at the highest density. Lake Thompson is the largest natural lake in South Dakota. It has had cyclical drying and filling for the past eighty years. Long-time residents remember when Lake Thompson was completely dry in the 1930s. In the early 1980s it became a 9,000 acre marsh and then through snow melt and heavy rains it became a lake which has taken over farms and washed out roads. The lake now covers 18,000 acres and is twenty feet deep. Lake Thompson is a National Natural Landmark, a major waterway for migrating birds, and a well-known fishing area.

Leaving eastern South Dakota, we drove to the Black Hills making a detour off of I-90 for a loop road through The Badlands and Buffalo Gap National Grasslands where I added a “lifer” to my bird list, a Mountain Bluebird. This area offers major birding opportunities similar to those in the Fort Pierre National Grasslands just a ways north. In winter these grasslands are full of raptors including Gyrfalcons, Ferruginous Hawks, Swainson’s Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Merlin, Northern Harrier, and both eagles, Bald and Golden. Around prairie dog towns, birders have spotted eight species of owls including Snowy, Burrowing, Short-eared, Northern Saw-whet, and Great Horned Owls. Grasslands provide excellent habitat for grassland sparrow species and birds such as Bobolinks,

Western Meadowlarks, Orchard Orioles, and both Loggerhead and Northern Shrikes (in winter).

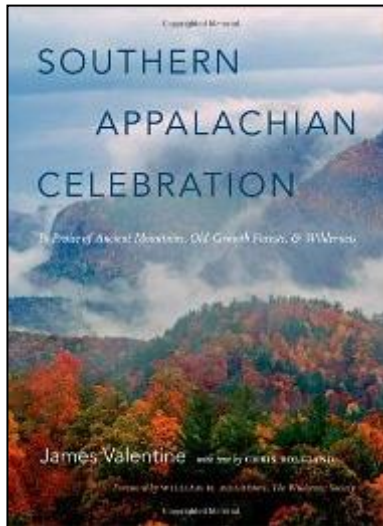
The first place Laura wanted to show me in the Black Hills was Spearfish Canyon. What a spectacular place with three waterfalls and a rushing mountain stream! Due to Laura's patience and determination, Caroline and I were able to see an American Dipper (another lifer). I added two lifers and Caroline added three lifers to our respective lists without even half trying. It was a splendid trip. Now ask me about the *T. rex* named STAN in the Black Hills ....

- Mary Wiersema Vermeulen

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**BOOK RELEASE OPEN HOUSE**  
**Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 1-5pm**

**Southern Appalachian Celebration**  
By James Valentine, text by Chris Bolgiano



This book is a paean to the Southern Appalachians, remarkable for its multi-hued depiction of a heartbreakingly beautiful and biologically rich part of our country, whose unique values are at risk from a host of human-caused pressures. . . . It took more than a decade and count-

less sojourns in the backcountry with a camera, from valley floor to mountaintop, to capture this collection of eloquent photographs. They open a new window on the Southern Appalachian region.

Sandy & Joe Greene's  
123 Foxwood Lane, Mt. Sidney  
Call 234-9336 for directions

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**Cage Birds Need Temporary Home**

Eleven Societal Finches owned by Wendy Dima need a temporary home. She has an indoor aviary for them but the household is temporarily moving to for two months and she can't take the finches with

her. She's looking for somebody to house them IN-DOORS for the two months while her house gets re-modeled.

If you can take Wendy's birds or know someone that can, please call her at 845-679-6639.

- Gabriel Mapel

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**Pre-Meeting Dinner**

The board members of the bird club usually invite the night's speaker to dinner before the meeting. We would like to invite the general membership, as well. This is a pay-your-own-dinner event (with the exception of the speaker) at Tony's Pizza at 32 Windward Dr. in Fishersville, next to the Food Lion. The dinner starts at 5pm. Please let Peter Nebel know before noon the day of the meeting if you are going to be there. He can be reached at [nebelpk@yahoo.com](mailto:nebelpk@yahoo.com) or 540-942-0946.

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**Ideas for Speaker Topics**

The Augusta County Bird Club has a membership with highly diverse interests in birds and nature in general. As the person arranging programming, I would like input on what would be topics of interest to you. This will help me in a couple of ways: If there are numerous members who want the same sort of presentations, I'll work hard on getting speakers addressing that topic; and there may be topics or speakers out there that I simply haven't thought of. I'll welcome any and all ideas at [nebelpk@yahoo.com](mailto:nebelpk@yahoo.com). Thanks for any help you can provide.

-Peter Nebel

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**AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB MINUTES**

September 12<sup>th</sup> 2011

President Penny Warren opened the meeting with a welcome to members and visitors. She invited persons to share what they have been seeing. It was reported that the Phalarope that had been seen in the area is now gone. Jo King reported that several nights of counting swifts resulted in over

10,500 being seen going down chimneys, most in the train depot area.

Grant announced that the club is planning a seed sale with pick up on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. He stated that prices will be higher this year especially the Black Oil Sunflower which will be almost double of last year. Order blanks will be available with the next Bulletin.

Jo announced a field trip to McCormick's Mill on the coming Wednesday, the 14<sup>th</sup>. Participants are asked to meet at McDonalds by 8:30 a.m. or show up by 9:00 at the Mill.

Penny proposed a possible field trip to Fort Lewis and Magee Marsh and asked persons to indicate any interest by signing the sheet being passed around.

She also encouraged members to write letters to the Newspaper regarding bird stories.

Allen talked about the Kiptopeke Challenge stating that he along with John Spahr and Ann Frye will make up the team, Augusta Bald Eagles that will participate in the Challenge. He informed the club that the challenge is a 24 hour birding event that raises money for the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. The team is hoping to retain first place trophy that they won last year.

Peter, program chairman, asked for ideas for programs. He also invited anyone interested to meet for dinner at Tony's in Fishersville prior to our meetings at 5:00 p.m. and meet the speaker for the evening.

He then introduced Brenda Tekin, the speaker for the evening who shared information about the Hawk Watch. She showed pictures and identifying features of the various hawks drifting over the mountain in their fall migration. She noted that YuLee along with Isabel Obenschain were founders of the Watch in 1976. Lisa Hamilton along with John and Moselle Hinkle were also involved in those initial counts.

The meeting adjoined following questions and comments.

- Grant Simmons, Secretary

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## Welcome new Members !

*Ann Cline  
Takota Schauer  
Helen Metiver  
Pat Ward*

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## Treasurer's Report

submitted by Catherine Kohus  
4/01/2011 – 8/31/2011

REGULAR OPERATING FUND		
BALANCE – 2/01/2010	\$6,573.87	
INCOME	\$486.41	
EXPENSES	\$212.25	
<b>BALANCE – 2/28/2010</b>		\$6,848.03
EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND		
BALANCE – 2/01/2010	\$20,195.98	
INCOME	\$70.00	
EXPENSES	\$3,325.00	
<b>BALANCE - 2/28/2010</b>		\$16,940.98
<b>TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 2/28/2011</b>		\$23,789.01

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## Bird Quiz!

Can you identify the bird below?



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

**Last Month: Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata*)**

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## Renewals Are Due January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012

This year, to make it easy to renew, you will be receiving your renewal form by mail with a return stamped envelope. We plan to send the forms out earlier this year before the holiday rush. Please return the forms by January 1<sup>st</sup> 2012.

- Thank you!

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Virginia Society of Ornithology Website

[virginiabirds.net](http://virginiabirds.net)

Augusta Bird Club Website

[www.augustabirdclub.org](http://www.augustabirdclub.org)

