



THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 47, No.2
October 2012

*“Divinest Autumn! Who may paint thee best,
forever changeful o’er the changeful globe?
Who guess thy certain crown, thy favorite crest,
The fashion of thy many-colored robe?”*

~ R.H. Stoddard

October Meeting

Date: Monday, October 8th, 7:00 PM
Place: Covenant Presbyterian Church
2001 North Coalter St., Staunton

Program: New Zealand, the Living Land

Speaker: Dr. William H. D. Leaning

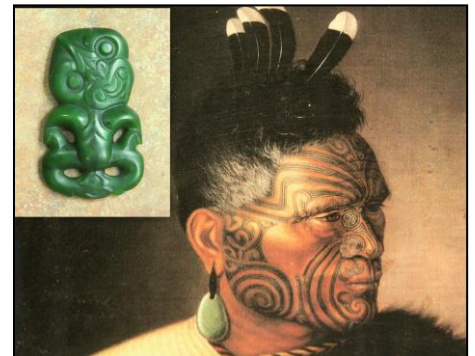
Eighty Million years ago, a primal southern land mass called Gondwana, slowly, broke apart, leaving a lone sliver of land adrift on the rim of a tectonic plate, later, becoming the islands of New Zealand.



Evolution produced some of the most unique flora and fauna ever seen. These islands were, completely, dominated by some 250

species of birds, with the exception of one mammal (a bat), a few reptiles and three kinds of frog. The birds, included nine species of Moa, the Haast Eagle, the largest eagle that ever lived, and the beautiful Huia sacred to the Maori but prized by collectors. New Zealand is one of the last places on earth to be settled. When first discovered, over 800 years ago, it was a truly primeval environment of volcanoes, geysers, lush rainforests, tussock country, glaciers and fjords. Within a hundred years of man's arrival with dogs, rats and fire more than a quarter of these, mostly, unique (to New Zealand) birds would disappear, forever.

At least one environmental cataclysm affected New Zealand before human colonization, probably, having a bearing on some of the earliest bird extinctions. Around 186 AD, a massive volcanic eruption, possibly, the most powerful and destructive on earth in the last 5,000 years emerged from the crater, now, known as Lake Taupo in the center of the North Island of New Zealand.



Although the adverse impact of human settlement is enormous, with many habitats and species lost, much beauty and diversity, still, exists. New Zealand has become a world

leader in bringing species back from the brink of extinction through a series of recovery programs. Tourism operators around New Zealand are, also, undertaking conservation measures to help preserve threatened bird populations. More than 30% of New Zealand's land has been set aside as National Parks, Reserves and special Heritage Sites to preserve the country's ecological heritage.

New Zealand remains a unique natural environment, continually, reminding us that, while much has been lost, there is much to save in that other land "down under".

Bill Leaning, originally, from New Zealand, is a retired veterinarian and enthusiastic nature photographer. He has traveled extensively throughout the world, visiting some 44 countries. In the spring of 1989, Bill and his wife, Clare, attended their first New Jersey Audubon "Cape May Birding Weekend" and were, severely, bitten by the "birding bug".

Field Trips

Thursday, October 4th : Licking Hole Creek, Crozet

Meeting Place & Time: 8:00 AM, Inn at Afton Mountain parking lot (hawk watch location)

Coordinator: Penny Warren

Please join Penny Warren for a return fall field trip to Licking Hole Creek in Crozet where we will look for migrants and returning fall/winter residents in the great, diverse habitat of woods, open fields, pond and stream. It is a mostly flat walking trail and will take approximately two or so hours for the round trip. We will stop in Crozet for coffee and a nosh following the trip.

Sunday, October 7th : Augusta Springs.

Meeting Place & Time: 8:00 AM, Big Lots parking lot, W. Beverley St., Staunton

Coordinator: Andrew Clem

There are always surprises to be had at this beautiful wetland area, which features a boardwalk across the low-lying parts. We expect to see a fair number of neotropical migrants (especially warblers and vireos) on their way south, plus herons and other water birds, and there is a good chance we'll

see some early-arriving winter birds (such as White-throated sparrows and kinglets) as well. Some of us will take an extended hike (about a mile) on the trail leading up the ridge and back, where various woodpeckers and tanagers might be seen. That trail is often muddy, so please wear appropriate shoes or boots, and dress according to the weather.

Wednesday, October 10th & 24th: McCormick's Mill

Meeting Place & Time: 8:30AM, McDonald's Parking lot at the Staunton Mall

Coordinator: Jo King, kingbird10@yahoo.com or 540-430-0186

Join Jo King on this fall walk around the Marl Creek Trail where she hopes to see many returning fall and winter birds. Waterfowl, sparrows, chickadees, kinglets and bluebirds are likely to be identified. Dress for the weather and bring a snack of your liking.

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

Birding Sky Islands and SE Arizona

I had the great fortune to go to Southeast Arizona for birding in mid August. I had not been in Arizona for more than a decade and had not been there since becoming a birder. I stayed in Tucson for the first



three nights and was out the door the first morning by 5:30 a.m. and drove to Green Valley to meet my bird guide, Laurens Halsley. Given the August monsoon rain season, Laurens had checked the California Gulch area the prior day and based on how much water was there and more rain coming that evening, Laurens suggested we head straight to the Gulch and try for the Five-striped Sparrow.

We traveled down Arivaca Road to Ruby Road and almost immediately, I had my first Roadrunner! Beep, beep! Life bird #1 in AZ!!! Birding highlights along the way were Gray Hawk, Canyon Towhee, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Botteri's, Cassin's and Black-throated Sparrows ... I thought the latter was quite striking. We arrived at the appoint-

ed spot, parked the car, walked and birded down into the gulch and picked up, among other birds, the Broad-billed Hummer, Black Phoebe, Canyon and Bewick's Wren and the anticipated Five-striped Sparrow. Along the way we saw a number of lizards, lesser earless being one, and a variety of butterflies. Other highlights on the first day were visiting Paton's feeders where I saw the beautiful Violet-crowned Hummingbird dazzling colors! And I saw my first Vermilion Flycatcher, a knock out of a bird I was looking forward to viewing. We went on to the Sonoita Creek Preserve and saw many birds including the Phainopepla.

Day two started with seeing a family of Gambel's Quail...so cute with their curlicues and then we caught a morning lift-off of several Harris's Hawks. A good portion of the day was spent in Madera Canyon where I added several new life birds such as the Painted Redstart, Varied Bunting, Verdin, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher and I added the Elegant Trogon to my US list. We proceeded to Montosa Canyon searching for the Plain-capped Starthroat. It was interesting that there were hummer feeders set up in the middle of nowhere and that individuals would come and replenish the feeders a couple of times per day. There were Black-chinned and Broad-billed Hummingbirds but no Plain-capped.

We took a couple of hours break, met up again and returned to Madera Canyon around sunset to listen for owls and whips. Our evening's concert featured the hoots and calls of the Whiskered Screech-Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Elf Owl and Mexican Whip-poor-wills. All in all, it was a fun-packed, bird-packed two days with Laurens.

On to Sierra Vista via a scenic by-way the next day and to my delightful lodging, a beautiful place, hacienda-style architecture and billed as a 'bed and bird.' I made several stops along the way and one in particular at Mary Jo Ballatore's home to try to catch, once again, the Plain-capped Starthroat Hummingbird that had been reported being seen off and on for a few days prior to my arrival. It was a no show! However, I did see the Lucifer. Another beauty! How much could I complain?!?



My next guide, Ron Beck, met me early the next morning and he took me to a near-by location where they are reintroducing Burrowing Owls. Anyone who knows me well knows about my love of owls so I was in seventh heaven to see these adorable owls and they appeared to be very curious about the two of us! We birded our way over to Fort Huachuca and to the various canyons, Miller, Carr and Ramsey. With a stop at Beatty's, I added the White-eared, Blue-throated and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds.



We hiked a little way through the shaded forest and saw Spotted Owls, an adult and a baby ... absolutely so happy to see the two of them! On to Carr Canyon and to say the least, the drive/road up the canyon was just a wee bit bumpy. A visit to a chiropractor after that road was in order! We heard the Cordilleran Flycatcher but I never saw one but I did see the Yellow-eyed Junco...and its nest. Upon returning to Ron's house to switch out cars and about to call it a day, his wife came out to say that the Plain-capped had been seen that afternoon at Mary Jo's. Fortunately, Ron lives very close to Mary Jo's so back in the car we went, plopped ourselves down at Mary Jo's feeders but once again, a no show for the Plain-capped!

I was leaving the next morning to head back to Tucson and I decided to stop at Mary Jo's yet a third time for the Plain-capped and calculated I would stay for a few hours before hitting the road to Tucson. Patience persevered as the Plain-capped did show up while I was there. Three was the charm for sure at Mary Jo's! I did my grateful-for-everything 'rain dance' and headed back to Tucson!

Throughout the trip, I saw approximately 20 species of many beautiful, new to my eyes, butterflies. I had two grand moments with butterflies that deserve mentioning. One was in Montosa Canyon looking for the Plain-capped Starthroat and we were walking through a dried river bed and it was filled with hundreds of Yel-



low Sulphur and Mexican Yellow butterflies flitting and floating all around us. I felt like I was in a magical, dreamland of some sort. The second time was in Huachuca Canyon and we kept running into flutters of 15-25, at one time, Mexican Sister butterflies ...a strikingly beautiful butterfly. Along the hike, in total, we must have seen upwards of a hundred Sisters. Very memorable butterfly moments!

A few other non-bird sightings included the desert cottontail, antelope jack rabbit, black-tailed jack rabbit, rock squirrel, Arizona gray squirrel, the horse lubber or 'Mexican General' grasshopper and one Western Diamondback rattlesnake. Can't leave Arizona without seeing a rattlesnake!



With all of the rains, the desert was quite lush and beautiful and I thoroughly enjoyed the variety of landscapes, vistas, and mountains and in particular the sacred mountain of the Tohono O'odham people, Baboquivari Peak. The variety of plants from ocotillo to all of the cacti with blooms and/or fruit and the colorful wildflowers added a variety of hues and textures to the backdrop of the desert.

Thanks to two, fabulous bird guides I saw 133 (7 were 'heard') species of birds of which 77, including 11 hummers, were life birds (yeah! How great is that?) and six that I had only seen previously in Central America and are now added to my US list. Whew! Quite a trip and I look forward to more birding in the Southwest.

-Penny Warren, President

2012 Seed Sale

Order Deadline: October 21

Pick-up: October 27 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!

Order forms will be sent out soon to all club members in the manner you usually receive the Bulletin – by email or by U.S. mail.

In addition, you may order online at <https://sites.google.com/site/abcseedssale>. To do so you will need to be signed up to use Google Wallet. Most people are able to do so without a hitch. But if you prefer to use a paper form and send us a check through the U.S. mail, you can download a form at our Seed Sale website, or just call or email and we'll send you one. If you have questions or would like additional copies of the flyer to share with friends, email abcseedssale@gmail.com or call Cris-ta Cabe at 540-234-9155.



A note about pricing: As you may recall, last year prices were sky-high due to high demand combined with scarcity. This year many prices are better, and we have been able to reduce our prices on August Premium mix, nyjer, and sunflower chips. In just about every case we are able to offer prices that are lower than the best available online price, and prices are especially competitive for suet cakes, Squirrel Buster feeders, nyjer (thistle), peanuts, and sunflower chips. Please support our

club's education and conservation efforts and purchase enough to see you and your feathered friends through the winter!

- Grant Simmons & Crista Cabe

The CBC is now FREE!

After nearly two years of internal discussions, budget modeling, head-scratching, and intense decision-making, two major changes will come to the Christmas Bird Count program effective with the upcoming 113th Count in December, 2012.

First, the CBC is now a free program. Audubon will no longer charge the \$5.00 fee of field participants.

Second, to minimize the effects of the loss of fee income, *American Birds* will no longer be printed on paper and mailed to participants, and Audubon will move to an online delivery of the summary results of the CBC.

In order to continue to fund the Christmas Bird Count program in the long term, Audubon will be moving to a voluntary donation model for the CBC.

With the online delivery of *American Birds* via a new interactive web presence including photos, summaries, and features, content can now be presented online as they are completed. Most critically, a new Citizen Science gateway will enable Audubon to be in touch directly with those participants who elect to take part and directly service the needs of participants as well as compilers.

While the integrity of the CBC is crucial to maintain for its bird trend data, it has become equally important for the ability to engage people in other citizen science projects. Toward that end Audubon will be expanding its Citizen Science projects, and the CBC will, of course, be a cornerstone program.

Audubon extends our deepest thanks to all of you for your long standing dedication to the Christmas Bird Count program. We especially appreciate your willingness to share your views with us, and this information has been crucial to the decisions summarized here.

We thank you for your work in making the CBC the continued success that it is.

Thanks very much, and have a wonderful FREE Christmas Bird Count season. Good birding!

Geoff LeBaron
CBC Director

Gary Langham
Vice-President & Chief Scientist

National Audubon Society

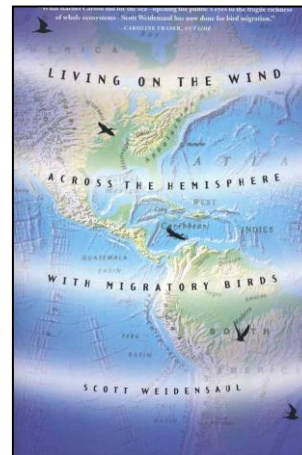
CONGRATULATIONS

The Augusta Bird Club wishes to congratulate Gabriel Mapel on being named eBird's birder of the month. We all know how much Gabriel does for the club and for birding in general. Now the rest of the country does too! The full feature can be found at the following link:

<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/ebm201209>

NATURALIST BOOK NOOK

Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds by Scott Weidensaul



From the Platte River in Nebraska and the Sandhill Cranes to the pampas of Argentina and the Swainson's Hawks, Weidensaul takes you to, across and through various areas of the world to learn of the phenomenon of migration. As the jacket cover states "Bird migration is the world's only true unifying natural phenomenon, stitching

the continents together in a way that even the great weather systems fail to do." Weidensaul delves into the how and why of these 'miraculous migrants.' A lot of territory and ground, in all meanings, is covered from describing many details specific to a number of birds, the fragility of the migratory web across the globe due to habitat fragmentation, deforestation, the use of pesticides to the conservation challenges that lie ahead.

As Weidensaul writes*"Over the course of more than six years, I traveled virtually the length of the hemisphere, logging nearly seventy thousand miles by jet, car, bush plane, sailing ketch, tundra buggy, dugout canoe, horseback and on foot—yet traveling fewer miles than a single small sandpiper would in its short lifetime, propelled only by muscle and the instinct to migrate."*

I truly appreciated his writing style of weaving in and out of scientific facts to a beautiful naturalistic style and his portrayal of the people he meets adds an extra layer of interest.

This book was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in the non-fiction category in 1999 and after reading the book, I understand why! A very informative book!

-Penny Warren

AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB MINUTES

September 10, 2012

President Penny Warren called the meeting to order at the Covenant Presbyterian Church at 7:00 pm.

She then introduced the students who were recipients of scholarships to Nature Camp this past summer; Jenna Benzing and Emily and Katy Van Assendelft. Later in the meeting they shared briefly their experience at camp and thanked the club for the scholarships.

Penny shared specifics for a Birding trip to Shenandoah River state park on September 15th asking participants to meet at 7:00 am at the Food Lion on Coalter Street.

Jo King announced that she will lead a trip to McCormick's Mill September 19th. She stated those going are to meet at 8:30 at the parking lot of the Staunton Mall.

Gabriel Mapel shared about a trip he will lead to Riprap on the 28th of September.

Allen Lerner reported that the Bald Eagles, (Allen, Ed & Nancy Lawler) will participate in the Kiptopeake Challenge on September 22nd. This is a fundraiser with funds benefitting the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. He asked for donations on behalf of his team, noting that they had won the trophy for seeing/hearing the most birds twice.

Crista shared about our annual seed sale that provides the funds to send youth to Nature Camp. The sale takes place in October and she stated that we will need someone to receive and record seed orders as the student at MBC that was helping us has graduated. Mary Mabel volunteered to take on that task. It is hoped that we could have order blanks out by the first of October.

Dan Perkuchin announced that he has formed a committee of Mary Vermeulen, Marietta Beverage and Allen Lerner to help him update our Bird Checklist. Andrew suggested that we could provide

a form on our website where members could note the numbers of birds they are seeing.

Penny shared an article that revealed cats are more destructive than we are aware of leaving 49% of their kills uneaten. She also noted there was an interesting program on HBO regarding the birders of Central Park in New York City.

Penny also informed us that YuLee has moved to the Upper Level in Baldwin Park and that she would enjoy visits from members of the club.

Peter Nebel then introduced Sara Holberg as the speaker of the evening who works with the Conservation Council. She shared what they are doing in Augusta County to keep it bird friendly. One thing that is eliminating bird friendly areas is the loss of farms and forests. She urged us to support efforts to save areas for bird habitat.

After a question and answer period the meeting adjourned.

- Grant Simmons, Secretary

Bird Quiz!



Can you identify the birds below?

The answer will be revealed next month.

Happy guessing!

Last Month: Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Virginia Society of Ornithology Website

virginiabirds.net

Augusta Bird Club Website

www.augustabirdclub.org

Birding Maps

Augusta County: <http://g.co/maps/49rjg>

Rockingham County: <http://g.co/maps/3xutb>

Albemarle County: <http://g.co/maps/7t6f4>

2013 Membership Renewal

Dear member,

Fall is here, and it's time to think about renewing your Augusta Bird Club membership for 2013. If you wish to renew, please mail me your dues and the completed form below before December if possible. Checks should be made out to Augusta Bird Club. Alternatively, you can give me your payment at one of the upcoming Club meetings. Note that any amount contributed over regular dues is tax deductible as a charitable contribution (see website for further details). If you will not be renewing, please let me know. Contact me any time for questions.

Sincerely,
Vic Laubach
ABC Membership Chair
Phone: 540-949-4497
Email: laubach@virginia.edu

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Augusta Bird Club 2013 dues form (please include with payment)			
Name: _____	Amount enclosed: \$ _____		
Address: _____ _____ _____	Mail to: Victor Laubach ABC Membership 104 Lanchester Ct Waynesboro, VA 22980		
Check box to indicate membership category:			
	Individual	Couple	Family
Meadowlark (Regular)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30
Cardinal (Contributing)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40
Kingbird (Sustaining)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75