



# THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 47, No.8  
April 2013

*"He learned to communicate with birds and discovered their conversation was fantastically boring. It was all to do with wind speed, wingspans, power-to-weight ratios and a fair bit about berries."*

~ Douglas Adams

## APRIL MEETING

**Date:** Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM  
**Place:** Covenant Presbyterian Church  
2001 North Coalter St., Staunton

**Program:** Brazil and the Pantanal  
**Speaker:** Dick Keifer

This month's talk chronicles the birds seen on a trip to the Rio de Janeiro area, Iguazu Falls, and the Pantanal in southwestern Brazil. The Pantanal is one of the world's largest wetlands.



The trip was taken during the dry season when the wildlife congregates around the remaining water pools. Dick Kiefer an emeritus chemistry professor at the College of William and Mary. He and his wife, Sharon, took the trip in August, 2011 in a group of six with a Brazilian guide.

## Field Trips

**Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>:** McCormick's Mill

**Meeting Place & Time:** 8:30 am, M<sup>c</sup>Donalds Parking Lot at the Staunton Mall (to car pool), or at the Mill by 9:00 AM.

**Coordinator:** Jo King at [kingbird10@yahoo.com](mailto:kingbird10@yahoo.com)  
or 540-430-0186

Enjoy a spring morning with Jo King to this beautiful place in the southern corner of Augusta County in hopes of finding many returning warblers, vireos, sparrows and waterfowl. Come along for the half day. Dress for the weather and bring a snack.

**Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>:** Shenandoah River State Park

**Meeting Time & Place:** 6:30 am, Food Lion, Coalter Street, Staunton

**Coordinator:** Penny Warren

Join Penny on a return trip to Shenandoah River State Park with its breathtaking vistas, rolling mountains and meandering river. We will be trying to catch the spring migration season of warblers and more and perhaps an array of wildflowers. This field trip does require several miles of walking on level terrain through woods and along the river. Wear comfortable walking shoes. After exploring the park we will head down Skyline Drive and continue our search for migrating birds. Bring snacks, water and lunch. Return to Staunton by 3:00.

Please RSVP for this trip so that we can schedule car pooling ... [penny@staunton.com](mailto:penny@staunton.com)

**Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>:** Springdale Water Gardens

**Meeting Time & Place:** 8:00 am, McDonald's at Staunton Mall or meet at the Water Gardens by 8:30.

**Coordinator:** Penny Warren

Come on out for a morning field trip to the lovely Springdale Water Gardens in search of spring migrants. Wear shoes for walking through open fields. If you are going to meet us at the gardens, please meet as soon as you turn off the main road going to the gardens as we will bird the entire road back to Tish's property.

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**Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>:** Riprap Trail, Shenandoah National Park

**Meeting Time & Place:** 7:30am, Dollar General Shopping Center Parking Lot on Rte 340 in Crimora, across from BP

**Coordinator:** Gabriel Mapel, [birdmangabri-el@yahoo.com](mailto:birdmangabri-el@yahoo.com) or 540-363-5035

Join Gabriel on this half-day walk on the Riprap Trail in search of migrating warblers, vireos, thrushes, and much else as well as resident woodland birds. Who knows what we may see as last year we found as last year on this trip we found 38 species including a Golden-winged Warbler. We'll plan to be finished by noon.



**Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Blue Ridge Parkway

**Meeting Time & Place:** 8:00 am, Afton Inn, Hawk Watch Parking Lot

**Coordinator:** Penny Warren

Join in on a morning drive down the beautiful Blue Ridge Parkway where we will stop at various spots walking and looking for the spring migrants. We'll keep our fingers crossed to find the

Cerulean Warbler as well as many other warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, Indigo Buntings, etc.

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## THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH *Feathered Architects*

*There is nothing in which the birds differ more  
from man  
than the way in which they can build and yet  
leave a  
landscape as it was before.*

-Robert Wilson Lynd



With spring around the corner, or with personal hopes of spring around the corner, and like many of you, I have been noticing various birds with nesting material and contemplating what wonderful architects our feathered friends are. On a local level, the most beautiful Bluebird nest I have seen was one created strictly out of pinecone needles, nothing else, and the fresh needles had a lovely rusty hue. It was worthy of placement in a modern art gallery! And then, the lovely Carolina Wren's nest constructed of two items, a bottom layer deep green moss and a substantial layer of black cow hair on top, a nest made out of flaxen colored horse hair, the amazing Baltimore Oriole nest with highlights of a blue or green string woven into the nest and a friend told me of a nest that her family had found made entirely of shredded dollar bills! Any guesses as to what bird constructed that nest?

I could go on and on about all of the beautiful nests to be seen in just Augusta County. And although any nest is a marvel, one that stands out for me, and a bit further afield, is the Tailorbird species who pierces holes along the edge of a living leaf



with its fine bill and then sows it together with spider silk or fine grass, leaving an opening at the top of the leaf creating a cocoon like nest only to be filled with soft material for the eggs and hatchlings. Sounds delightfully cozy!

There are two beautiful books on nests if you care to see an array of marvelous photographs. The first one is Nests by Sharon Beals and the other is Eggs & Nest by Rosamond Purcell, Linnea S. Hall and Rene Corado. Alternatively, you can find some of the photographs from both books on line.

So, as we hit the trails, roads, ponds, mountains, etc. looking for all of the spring migrants and those who will reside here for the summer, keep your eye out for nests and take a moment to consider what amazing architects we have among us!

Happy Spring!

-Penny Warren, President

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## **BIG SPRING DAY** Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>

It's spring and you know what that means right? It means we're about to be flooded with northbound migrating birds in April/May heading for their breeding grounds! Each spring, at the height migration, we conduct a census of the birds in Augusta County called **Big Spring Day**. This year Big Spring Day will be conducted on Sunday, May 5, and we need your help.



As always, we will organize into small teams of 1-4 birders who will spend the day birding within their territory to record all birds sighted (or heard). Typically teams will start early in the morning and bird as long as desired in order to cover their terri-

tory. Most of the areas require little or no walking, and a lot of areas simply entail slow driving and stopping when birds are spotted or heard or walking short distances from your car.

Please consider participating in Big Spring Day to help us conduct the best census possible. So find a friend, gather a team, or go it alone, and enjoy a fun day of birding! It's also a great opportunity for less experienced birders to team up with more advanced birders to learn more tips on bird identification.

To participate, contact Vic Laubach (see below) and let him know 1) if you have a favorite territory you wish to cover, 2) if you are going alone or have a team (and who the team members are), 3) if you wish to find a team or partner, and 4) if you need a territory and have any preferences in type of territory such as valley, mountain, driving or hiking. because Vic needs to coordinate all teams or individuals with territories so we can efficiently cover our county, so please contact him sooner rather than later

Territories we need to cover include: Betsy Bell and Montgomery Hall Parks, Bells Lane, South River preserve (Cowbane Preserve), Swoope (including Boy Scout Camp and Smith Lake), Augusta Wetlands, Elliott Knob area (Hite Hollow Rd), North Mountain area, Big Levels, Stuarts Draft areas (waste water plant, Hall School Rd, Quillen's pond, Guthrie Rd), Waynesboro (Ridgeview Park and In-vista Ponds), McCormick's Mill, Shenandoah Mtn, Braley Pond, Elkhorn Lake, Todd Lake, Natural Chimneys, Reddish Knob, Blue Ridge Parkway, Rt 610, and Sherando Lake area.

Questions? Contact Vic Laubach  
434-249-2927  
[laubach@virginia.edu](mailto:laubach@virginia.edu)

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## **RAPTORTHON** Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>

On Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, a team of Augusta Bird Club members (Vic Laubach, Brenda Tekin, Penny Warren and Gabriel Mapel) will be conducting a **Raptorthon**. Like Birdathon, Raptorthon is a sponsored Bird Count that focuses on Raptors. It's a fun event organized by The Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) in which we request pledges from folks to sponsor us on this day where we search for as many raptor species (and optionally other species) as possible. More information can be found here:  
<http://www.hmana.org/raptorthon/>

All money raised will support raptor conservation and hawk migration monitoring in North America. This year, half of the money our team raises will go directly to support our local Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch and half will go to HMANA to support their efforts.



Please consider sponsoring our Raptorthon by making a pledge for any amount you can. You can pledge a set amount or according to the number of species we find. Complete the pledge form at the end of the newsletter and mail or email it to Voc Laubach. Alternatively, you can donate online at <http://hmana.ejoinme.org/raptorthon> (select Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch from menu). We will report the results of our Raptorthon to you soon after.

Team, *Fly Like An Eagle*, thanks you for your support. We're looking forward to a fun day of birding and raising funds for raptors and our hawk watch! Contact Vic any time with questions.

Vic Laubach  
434-249-2927  
[laubach@virginia.edu](mailto:laubach@virginia.edu)

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## STAUNTON EARTH DAY/WEEK Celebrating "Mother Earth"

Earth Week will be celebrated in Staunton during the week of April 13. The Augusta Bird Club (ABC) will sponsor one activity during the week and an exhibit in the main Earth Day event on Saturday. This will be ABC's third year participating, and the celebration is expected to be bigger and better than ever.

Earth Week activities will include ABC's bird walk at the Frontier Culture Museum on April 13; a presentation at Mary Baldwin College by Laurel Woodworth on "One Woman's Trek across the Commonwealth;" and a Wild & Scenic Film Fest presentation at the Visulite Theater on April 18. The main Earth Day event on April 20 will include activities for the whole family at many of the 25+ exhibits, including the ABC exhibit, as well as

"flash-type" events for everyone to join. There will also be a classic "tweed" bike-riding event sponsored by Transition Staunton and Black Dog Bikes.

Come and join us at the ABC exhibit and talk to people about the bird club, and enjoy the other exhibits and fun activities. The event is from 9 AM to Noon.



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## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### WARBLER PROGRAM

**Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup>** - Penny Warren will do a program at ACE Hardware in Waynesboro at 9:00 a.m. on Warblers.... just in time for spring migration!

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## EARTH DAY HELP NEEDED

The bird club is supporting the Staunton community Earth Week/Day event in April by sponsoring two activities. Additional help is needed for these two activities.

**April 13<sup>th</sup>, 8 - 9 AM** – ABC will lead a bird walk through the Frontier Culture Museum and grounds located off Rt. 250 on the east side of Staunton. On March 15 we led a similar walk and had 15 participants – mostly novice birders including a family with two children. We had enough leaders to split the participants into two groups. One or two more leaders are needed.

**April 20<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 AM - Noon** – Staunton will celebrate Earth Day in the downtown parking lot adjacent to the Farmers Market at Middlebrook Ave and S. Lewis St. ABC will have a booth with a display about the bird club as well as two, simple bird feed-



er craft activities for kids. We need 3-4 more helpers for 2 two-hour shifts. This is a popular and fun activity, and no experience is needed.

Please contact Darrell Schwalm ([schwalmie2@aol.com](mailto:schwalmie2@aol.com), 540-885-00150 to sign-up to help or for more information.

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## RIVERFEST

**April 30, 10 AM – 2 PM** – ABC will also have an exhibit at the RiverFest event in Waynesboro on April 30. The exhibit will provide information about the bird club activities. Volunteers are needed to help staff the exhibit. Please contact Linda Matkins ([critters@cfw.com](mailto:critters@cfw.com), [linda.matkins@gmail.com](mailto:linda.matkins@gmail.com); 540-383-8229) if you can help.

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## NATURALIST'S BOOK NOOK

*Bird Song: A Natural History* by Don Stap

If for no other reason was I glad to have read Don Stap's *Bird Song* than to be aware of Cornell's Maccaulay Library of Natural Sounds, a collection of approximately 130,000 individual bird song recordings (the largest in the world) and to know there is a second set of the recordings stored in a vault in a limestone cave! I thought that was a fascinating piece of information. And that fact was found on page four ... I wondered how many other facts and information would I learn in the remaining 240 pages?!?! The answer ... a lot!

If you have any interest in the phenomenon of bird song, determining if it is learned or instinctual, regional dialects, just how many songs does the Brown Thrasher have, why does the Chestnut Warbler have a pre-dawn song and a different one after sunrise and the development of bio-acoustics in ornithology, then grab this book. You can go along with Stap as he follows a world's leading expert in birdsong, Donald Kroodsma, who pursues birds and their songs in various parts of the US and Central America.

Although the scientific experiments that were done to birds to determine how a bird makes sounds is a very small part of the book, I was not particularly keen reading about these facts. That being said, the majority of the book from the history of studying bird song, the breakthrough of the audio spectrograph to specific facts about a variety of birds, is fascinating.

Penny Warren

## YULEE LARNER ARTICLE ARCHIVE AVAILABLE

As you know, YuLee Lerner, the 'Bird Lady' from Staunton, is a founding member of our Augusta Bird Club as well as Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch.



YuLee has also been a **Random ramblings** regular author of weekly articles in the Staunton News Leader since 1977. She is now in her 90s but still writing bi-weekly articles! During her recent move to Brightview Assisted Living, YuLee did not have room for her large collection of scrapbooks. Thus I have spent this past winter slowly going through all her scrapbooks, scanning every article and story, and organizing them by year into navigable PDF files with tables of contents so we have a permanent, digital archive of all her articles. Well, I am now nearly finished and should have the complete collection available soon for club members upon request. If you would like to have a DVD containing the entire collection of YuLee's articles, please let me know so I can bring enough copies to the next club meeting.

Vic Laubach  
[434-249-2927](tel:434-249-2927)  
[laubach@virginia.edu](mailto:laubach@virginia.edu)

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## AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB MINUTES

March 11, 2013

President Penny Warren called the meeting to order at 7:00 meeting at the Covenant Presbyterian Church by welcoming several visitors. She introduced Becky Kohler as a new member. It was reported that a Red Crossbill was reported during the Great Backyard Bird count on Frog Pond road. Also there were several sightings of Longspurs.

Field trips were announced to McCormick's on Wednesday led by Jo King and another to the Crozet area by Vic Laubach on Saturday. Gabriel Mapel will be leading a field trip to Natural Chimneys next Monday. Penny will be leading a bird walk at the Frontier museum while Andrew Clem in conducting another in regard to the One Book/One Community program.

Vic shared about the Raptor search that he will be participating in and asked for donations. A team of Brenda Tekin, Gabriel and himself will be birding for Raptors, calling themselves the "Fly like an Eagle" team. The purpose is to raise money for HU-

MA. One half of the funds they raise will go to our own Hawk Watch. Their desire is to erect a display sign at the Hawk Watch location.

Vic shared he is putting Yulee Lerner's Newspaper columns which started June 6, 1977 and continues today to a PDF format which he will be glad to share with interested members.

He also shared he will be chairing the Big Spring Day on Sunday May 5th and would like those interested in participating notify him of their interest and territory they will survey.

Darryl Schwalm announced the VSO annual meeting will be held in Leesburg April 26-28 and stated he is planning to attend.

Walt Childs, Nominating chairman joyfully reported that Lisa Hamilton has graciously accepted the task of serving as the club's Treasurer. He also gave a tribute to Penny who made a presentation on Hummingbirds to over 60 people gathered at the Harrisonburg Ace Store.

Penny has volunteered at the Wildlife Center and stated they need more volunteers. She also reported that a Rufus Hummingbird banded in Florida turned up in Alaska.

The president reminded members that our May meeting would be in Waynesboro at Ridgeview Park on May 18th.

Peter Nebel then introduced Edith Kretsch, Park Manager for Natural Chimneys Park. She reported that Augusta County now owns the park and that there is no fee for visitation to the park. She shared their efforts to make the park a natural area, fostering native plants and invited club members to visit

- Grant Simmons, Secretary

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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)

## Birding Maps

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

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

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



### Bird Quiz!

Can you identify the bird at left?

The answer will be revealed next month.  
Happy guessing!

**Last Month:**  
**Ochraceus Peewee**  
(*Contopus ochraceus*)

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Pledge Coupon



Pledge Coupon

Yes, I will sponsor you in HMANA's RAPTORTHON at a flat rate:

My donation of:  \$10  \$25  \$50  \$75  \$125  \_\_\_\_\_ (other amount)  
is enclosed (Make check payable to "HMANA")

OR: I will sponsor you according to the number of species you find:

For  each raptor species:  \$1  \$2  \$5  \$10  \_\_\_\_\_ (other amount)

For  each non-raptor or for  each bird species (raptor or non-raptor):

\$0.10  \$0.25  \$0.50  \$1.00  \_\_\_\_\_ (other amount)

Check all boxes that apply, please!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

HMANA will automatically issue a charitable donation receipt for donations of \$10 or more, and for lesser amounts on request.  Please provide me with a receipt.

Mail or email this pledge coupon to: Victor Laubach, 104 Lanchester Ct  
Waynesboro, VA 22980. Email: [laubach@virginia.edu](mailto:laubach@virginia.edu)

