



THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 48, No.1
September 2013

"For the rain it raineth every day!"

~ Shakespeare

September Meeting

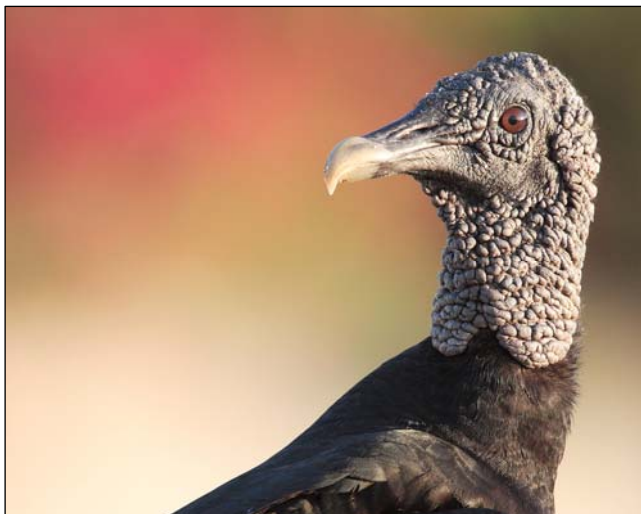
Date: Monday, September 9th, 7:00 PM

Place: Covenant Presbyterian Church
2001 North Coalter St., Staunton

Program: Vultures of the Allegheny Highlands

Speaker: Dr. Keith Carson, PhD

Of the 22 species of vultures worldwide, only 3 are found within the continental United States. Dr. Carson will present a talk on his experiences with the Black and Turkey vultures of the Blue Grass Valley. Come learn about the range, migration habits, nesting behavior and diet of these oft maligned masters of the air. You won't want to miss his description of their defense mechanisms and the annual Vulture Festival in Wenonah, NJ.



Dr. Carson's storied and winding path has taken him from Roswell, New Mexico to Japan, NC State, UNC-Chapel Hill, the Duke Marine Lab on the Outer Banks (where birds first seri-

ously caught his attention), and Harvard Medical School. He finally settled in at Old Dominion University as a member of the Biology Faculty and director of the electron microscopy lab and retired from that position in 2006 after 25 years.

He now lives in the Blue Grass Valley of Highland county, with his wife Polly. He is a member of the Bath-Highland Bird Club and has served on the Board of the Virginia Society of Ornithology for 3 years. He is also a founding member of the Allegheny Highlands Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists, currently serves on the Board for the Virginia Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, and is Executive Director of the Cowpasture River Preservation Association.

Field Trips

Saturday, September 7th: Confusing Fall Warblers
Meeting Place & Time: Afton Inn parking lot at 8:00AM rain or shine
Coordinator: Allen Lerner
birdergonewild@yahoo.com

Join Allen Lerner on this half day adventure where we will look for migrating Warblers, Tanagers, Vireos, and Thrushes to name a few along the Blue Ridge Parkway and Rt. 610. After the field trip we will meet back at the Afton Inn and take a peek to see what is coming through the gap at the Hawk Watch.

Dress for the weather that day and bring snacks.

Wednesday, Sept. 18th: McCormick's Mill
Meeting Place & Time: McDonald's Parking lot at the Staunton Mall at 8:30AM or 9AM at the Mill.
Coordinator: Jo King, kingbird10@yahoo.com or 540-430-0186

Enjoy an 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, hummingbirds, and sparrows. Come along for the half day. Dress for the weather and bring a snack.



Monday, September 23rd: Natural Chimneys
Meeting Place & Time: Big Lots parking lot, W. Beverley St., Staunton at 8:00AM,
Coordinator: Penny Warren, penny@Staunton.com

Come along with Penny for a morning trip to see what is happening in the birding world at Natural Chimneys. We will check for any migrants and those who might be staying through the fall and winter. We will also stop on Badger Road to look for any Red-headed Woodpeckers.

Saturday, September 28th: Riprap Trail
Meeting Place & Time: The Dollar General Shopping Center on Rte 340 in Crimora, (across from BP) at 8:00AM
Coordinator: Gabriel Mapel birdmangabriel@yahoo.com

Join Gabriel for a fall outing to Riprap Trail in search of migrating warblers and other southbound birds as well as early returning winter residents. We will walk about 2 miles on a flat, but in places rocky trail, and will cross a stream once or twice. We will plan to finish up by lunchtime.



THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

Summer's Closing

Like many of you perhaps, I am scratching my head and wondering where did the summer go?!? The Tree Swallows have begun to flock on the wires for several weeks at this point, reports of various warblers moving through, the hawk watch has begun and all of the nesting boxes on Bell's are empty.

My clan of "Desperate House Birds of Bell's Lane" continued to amuse me with their house swapping, attempts to chase me away while checking egg and fledgling activity and the beauty of their nest building is always a wonder. Their tireless efforts for almost four months amounted to fledging approximately 40 Bluebirds, 20 Tree Swallows and seven Chickadees. Overall numbers are a bit lower than last year partially due to no third clutches into August for the Bluebirds and I think we may have had more losses this year.

The Grasslands Bird Surveys went well with the Dickcissels cooperating by returning to Michael Godfrey's farm this summer. The Smithsonian was pleased to be able to have this new addition to their statistics. The final report will not be available for a bit longer.



Although it is always bittersweet to say goodbye to our summer residents, we can look forward to and enjoy the migrating warblers, hawks, monarchs and our winter residents.

A warm welcome back to any of you who have been traveling this summer and I hope to see many of you at the meeting in September!!

-Penny Warren, President

HUMMINGBIRDS AT HOME

In case you haven't heard there is a new citizen science initiative by Audubon to help scientists understand how climate change, flowering patterns, and people providing nectar are impacting hummingbirds, please check out the website and consider participating.

<http://birds.audubon.org/hummingbirds-home>

ROCKFISH GAP HAWK WATCH

Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch Begins 38th Season

The Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch is ready and excited for the 2013 fall raptor migration season (our 38th season since 1976)! We officially began on August 15, and we will be counting through the end of November. We had an awesome season last year with 21,497 total raptors including three new season records (224 Bald Eagles, 370 Cooper's Hawks and 26 Merlin) and three runner-up season records (275 Osprey, 64 Red-shouldered Hawks and 267 American Kestrels)!



This past winter we applied to HMANA (Hawk Migration Association of North America) for a grant to design and install an information display for visitors at the hawk watch. We won the grant and forged ahead with the design this spring. Our new display has been completed and installed on site and will remain throughout the season. The grass has been mowed, weeds have been pulled, and one HUGE bush has been cut down at the corner of the patio, making for much wider views and more seating space!

Come visit us this fall. The hawk watch is located on the north side of the Inn at Afton, just off highway 64 at exit 99. Help us find the raptors and see if this year of crazy weather will bring us some new raptor records! The hawk watch will be manned every weekend and most weekdays, weather permitting, usually from 8am - 5pm.



Bring a chair or blanket, sunscreen & hat, snacks & drinks, and don't forget your binoculars! The largest number of raptors can be seen during mid to late September with a good variety continuing throughout October. Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Goshawks, Red-shouldered Hawks and Golden Eagles rule November. We hope to see you up at "the Watch" this fall!

- Vic Laubach
& Brenda Tekin
(Co-Coordinator)

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Craney Island Birding

On August 10th I joined a group from the Monticello Bird Club on a morning birding trip to Craney Island in Portsmouth, VA. We had a great time together and found 53 bird species. Thanks to Mike Iwanik, David Hughes, and Adam D'Ornofrio, for guiding us. Craney Island, actually a 2,500 acre peninsula, is a man-made disposal sight for material dredged from the local channels and main-



tained by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Being both sandy and wet with ponds full of tiny aquatic creatures, Craney Island has become a vital food, nesting and rest stop for many migrating and wintering birds. Fortunately the Corps works with local conservationists to help maintain this bird habitat. Least Terns and Piping Plovers nest here in protected locations, largely due to all the work and research done by Ruth Beck since the 1960s. Unfortunately, the future of Craney Island for avian use remains quite precarious.

With large numbers of Semipalmated Sandpipers ruling the landscape, we also observed numerous other shorebirds mixed in such as Least Sandpipers, Semipalmated Plovers, Spotted Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and many

Killdeer. In one pond we also watched a group of foraging Short-billed Dowitchers, White-rumped Sandpipers, Stilt Sandpipers, a Marbled Godwit and a Pectoral Sandpiper. At one point a pair of Whimbrel announced their presence with their loud, rapid whistles and proceeded to land nearby. The larger and deeper ponds held groups of American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, Ruddy Ducks, Mallards, Canada Geese, Laughing Gulls and a few Great Black-backed Gulls. Royal Terns far outnumbered Caspian Terns, which outnumbered Least Terns. The shore of the James River held Ruddy



Turnstones, Sanderlings, Double-crested Cormorants, Brown Pelicans, Great Blue Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets and an immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron. Raptors were represented by a pair of Red-tailed Hawks, some Osprey and a nice Cooper's Hawk. Barn Swallows, Cliff Swallows and Purple Martins were plentiful, and we found Tree Swallows and a few Bank Swallows on Rt 626 on our way home. I believe that this would be a worth-while place for the Augusta Bird Club to think about visiting someday (group passes are required ahead of time).

-Vic Laubach

BLUE RIDGE YOUNG BIRDERS CLUB NEWS

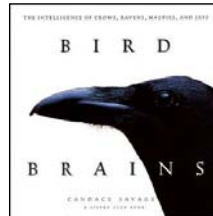
Coming up in October is the Blue Ridge Young Birders Club (BRYBC)'s 1st anniversary and the club is going great! We've had wonderful field trips to various locations. The BRYBC installed a Bluebird nest box trail at PVCC this spring, thanks to a grant from the Virginia Bluebird Society. We have had a very successful season on the trail and the young birders have had such a fun time taking turns monitoring the trail! Also, we would like to ask everyone that if you are in the market for new optics and plan to buy through Eagle Optics, that you first go to the young birders website (www.blueridgeyoungbirders.org) and click on the

Eagle Optics site on the right hand of the page, and then search for the item you want and buy it. That way, if you first went through the young birders website, the young birders get 5% of your purchase. Or call Eagle Optics and mention that you are going through the Blue Ridge Young Birders Club. Also, if you are purchasing from Amazon.com, we would much appreciate it if you would first go to the young birders website, then click on the Amazon link on the right hand part of the page, and then buy the item you want, we will get 5% of this also, since we are an affiliate with amazon. Also, if you know any avid young birders, please refer them to our club! Our club age range is 12-18 though we will make exceptions for younger kids if they are passionate about birds and are able to be quiet on the trail in order to not spook the birds :). Thanks so much for your interest in BRYBC and good birding!

NATURALIST BOOK NOOK

Bird Brains, The Intelligence of Crows, Ravens, Magpies and Jays By Candace Savage

I once heard a statement about crows and their intelligence and that they 'were just plain unhappy and bored with their lot in life!' Case in point to boredom, I wonder how many of you caught the YouTube video making the rounds a year or more ago of the crow in Russia on top of a snow-covered roof and the crow grabs some sort of lid and begins to sled down the roof over and over and over again! Hey, why not?



Although this book was published in 1995 and more research has been done by now, it is nonetheless a great insight into many aspects of corvids, offering enough facts and folklore to keep you engaged. I was intrigued to read about their playful behavior, great memory, language skills, their need to belong to a group, etc. Additionally, the photography is exceptional so it is well suited to be another great coffee table book!

Happy reading!

-Penny Warren

Bird Quiz!

Can you identify this confusing Fall warbler?



The answer will be revealed next month.

Happy guessing!

If you would like to "nominate" a photo for the newsletter, please contact the editor, Paul Callo at pcallo@mbc.edu

Treasurer's Report

submitted by Catherine Kohus

1/01/2013 – 5/31/2013

REGULAR OPERATING FUND		
BALANCE – 1/01/2013	\$6,644.74	
INCOME	\$620.70	
EXPENSES	\$1008.80	
BALANCE – 5/31/2013		\$6,256.64
EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND		
BALANCE – 1/01/2013	\$17,569.19	
INCOME	\$2541.00	
EXPENSES	\$3,032.25	
BALANCE - 5/31/2013		\$17,077.84
TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 5/31/2013		\$23,334.48

Virginia Society of Ornithology Website

virginiabirds.net

Augusta Bird Club Website

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>
