



THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 48, No.2
October 2013

*"To Indian eyes, I sometimes think even a humming-bird
leaves his trail in the air."*

~ James Fenimore Cooper

October Meeting

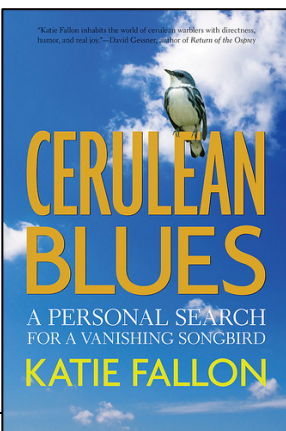
Date: Monday, October 14th, 7:00 PM
Place: Covenant Presbyterian Church
2001 North Coalter St., Staunton

Program: Cerulean Blues
Speaker: Katie Fallon

The cerulean warbler is the fastest-declining Neotropical migrant songbird in the US. A favorite with bird watchers, this 9-gram bird is notoriously difficult to spot as it forages high in the tree canopy. In addition to the natural history of the cerulean warbler, this talk will explore reasons for the species' decline as well as what we can do to help save it.



Katie Fallon is the author of the book *Cerulean Blues: A Personal Search for a Vanishing Songbird*, which was recently named a finalist for the Reed Award for Outstanding Writing on the Southern Environment. Her work has appeared in a wide variety of magazines and literary journals, and she has taught writing at Virginia Tech and West Virginia University. Katie is also a co-founder of the Avian Conservation Center of



Appalachia, a nonprofit dedicated to conserving the region's wild birds through rehabilitation, education, and research.

Field Trips

Tuesday, Oct. 8th: Rockfish Valley Trail
Meeting Place & Time: Afton Inn parking lot,
7:45AM
Coordinator: Penny Warren

Come along with Penny and meet up with Walt Child in Nellysford for morning birding at the Rockfish Valley Trail. Let's see what an early fall day will bring..... warblers, vireos, sparrows, hawks ... ??? We will be back to Afton by noon.

Wednesday, Oct. 16th: McCormick's Mill
Meeting place/time: Meet at the McDonald's parking lot at the Colonial Mall in Staunton at 8:30am or at the Mill at 9:00 am.
Coordinator: Jo King at kingbird10@yahoo.com or 540-430-0186

Join Jo for a leisurely walk of the Marl Creek Trail at McCormick's Mill in hopes of finding early wintering birds such as Brown Creeper, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows, kinglets and waterfowl. A late summer migrant still hanging around would be a good find.

Dress for the weather. Rain will cancel this trip.

Thursday, Oct. 17th: Licking Hole Creek, Crozet

Meeting Place & Time: Afton Inn parking lot, 8:00AM

Coordinator: Penny Warren

Join Penny on one of our fall trips to check out Licking Hole Creek. We will be looking for sparrows, Red-breasted Nuthatches, early waterfowl, Yellow-rumped Warblers and any late warblers. We will stop in Crozet for a cup of coffee and a nosh and then go check out the pond and surrounding area off of Old Trail Drive and then proceed to the pond at King Family Vineyard before heading back to Afton, winding up by 12:30 or so.

FIELD TRIPS AFAR?

Honduras

It was mentioned at the September meeting that Wildside Nature Tours offers fundraising trips for bird clubs and they had asked our club to look at an organized trip to Pico Bonito Lodge in Honduras. For seven days, six nights, the ground cost for double occupancy is \$2200. The trip could be arranged any time next spring. The club would earn \$200/person.

Arizona

The club has talked of an August birding trip to Arizona specifically to see hummingbirds. There may be an opportunity to organize this trip for seven days, 6 nights with the ground cost for double occupancy being \$1795.

If either of these trips interests you, please let Penny Warren know (penny@staunton.com) to be kept in the loop and get more information when available.

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

California Dreamin' – Part One

Although I did not know when planning my trip to California, this year is the 50th anniversary of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*. Upon this realization, I thought it was most appropriate for me to be birding in Northern California! Tippi Hedren was making guest appearances in Bodega Bay area as well as Point Reyes.

I arrived in California during the evening and had an almost moonless night heading to Point Reyes, my home base for the next few days, but as I was getting closer to my destination, the aroma of the eucalyptus trees filled the night time drive. It was delightful and I knew I was not in Staunton anymore.

Managing to get out the door the next morning by 7, I met my guide, Keith Hansen, at Bovine Bakery in Point Reyes Station. With coffee and a delicious break-



fast in hand, we headed to Olema to be greeted by numerous White-tailed Kites as well as Bewick's Wrens, Violet Green Swallows, Bushtits, Western Bluebirds, just to name a few. As we were walking and birding, Keith explained the geography of the area and that we were almost standing on top of the San Andreas Fault! Good to know!! In spite of knowing that, I was completely taken in by the beauty of the area absolutely exquisite.

Continuing on our way, we saw a group of nine California Quail, handful of Barn Owls and Great Horned Owls, a Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Tricolored, Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds. Arriving at the Point Reyes lighthouse, it began as a beautiful, sunny day and we managed to catch a Peregrine, Northern Harrier, Brandt's Cormorants,



Common Murres and Western Gulls before the fog began moving in and within 15 minutes, we were completely engulfed by the fog. Time to move on.... We headed to Drakes Bay. There

were probably close to 200 Elegant Terns, Pelagic Cormorants, Pigeon Guillemot, Black Oystercatchers, Heermann's and California Gulls, Black Phoebe, Townsend's Warbler and Western Tanager. Drakes Bay was also home to Harbor Seals,



Harbour Porpoises and Elephant Seals. After a quick lunch break at Drakes Beach, where we got a Virginia Rail and Sora, we continued onto to Tomales Bay and caught some glimpses of the fabled, once thought to be extinct, Tule Elk. Through conservation efforts in the 1990's, they have made what appears to be a fairly stable comeback with approximate numbers around 4,000. I was pleased to be able to check them off of my mammal wish list for California.



Stops at various locations throughout the afternoon gave us opportunities to see Western Sandpipers, Marbled Godwits, Western Wood Pewee, Hutton's Vireo, Acorn Woodpeckers, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Wrentits and one Black-throated Gray Warbler ... and more. My guide mentioned that Wrentits typically nest in the middle of poison oak, mate for life, the female sings and they actually sleep together and one will put its wing over top the other during the night! How sweet is that?!?! This was apparently learned from a webcam.

I also was able to visit friends from DC who had relocated to Sonoma and I visited the Institute for Bird Populations. One of their staff had conducted the banding program I completed several years ago near Warrenton, VA.

Before heading on to Monterey, I went by Bolinas and specifically to my bird guide's art gallery only to catch the Black-chinned Hummingbird, a rarity in this part of California a red flag on e-bird when I posted that one!



If you look at a map of California, Point Reyes National Seashore is a mere speck on the map, but

oh my, what a special, spectacular speck, San Andreas Fault and all! I hope to return!!

-Penny Warren, President

Part Two - Birding in Monterey
will be in the November issue.

2014 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Dear members,

Fall is here, and it's time to think about renewing your Augusta Bird Club membership for 2014. If you have already renewed, thank you! If you still need to renew, please mail me your dues along with the completed form found at the end of this newsletter by December 31st. Checks should be made out to Augusta Bird Club. Alternatively, you can give me your payment at the next Club meeting. Note that any amount contributed over regular dues is tax deductible as a charitable contribution (see website for further details). Contact me any time if you have any questions.

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

NOTES FROM THE FIELD



Ft. Lewis Weekend Report

During the last weekend in September, six Augusta Bird Club friends enjoyed the ambiance of Ft. Lewis Lodge operated by John and Caryl Cowden, innkeepers extraordinaire. We were there to seek out birds and we compiled a bird list of forty-two species (see below) while we roamed this expansive 3,200 mountain estate where Col. Charles Lewis settled around 1750. Now owned by the

Cowden's, this property includes the scenic Cowpasture River, pastureland where black angus and deer graze, a sky deck used to view the night sky bright with stars, the "Jo King" bird walk up and down the long lane as well as back along the tall grasses and wildflowers along the pasture land, cornfields and river where Grant Simmons loves to find sparrows. We spotted rabbits eating the apples beside the lodge and otters swimming in the river. Saturday night, the sky was clear and bright with stars. The Milky Way was easily seen and distinctive. Cassiopeia was splendid.

Other areas explored included the Fish Hatchery, which is now completely covered including the pond where we found so many Great Blue Herons in past years. The friendly keeper of the fish said he still saw many Bald Eagles—so often that he knew their cry—and directed us to an area where they congregated. True to his prediction we saw two Bald Eagles and heard a hound dog that eventually appeared following his nose. Starke and Jean reported that the weeds along the other pond that we visited in previous years with YuLee Lerner were taller than Starke. That was sad. Our memories of the discussions with YuLee about the differences between New England asters and other asters (New Jersey?) found there came to our minds.



John and Caryl have continued to add structures and places to sit through the years including a pavilion, more log cabins, and a new garden area with a memorial to their friend, JoAnn. Their three children are easing out of the twenties (27, 30, and 33) and living in big cities—New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. Of course, Caryl's cooking continues draws raves. It is a good thing that we walk a lot while there so we do not gain ten pounds on a weekend of such delicious eating.

And now the bird list, in no particular order:

Bald Eagle ▫ Screech Owl ▫ Northern Mockingbird ▫ Palm Warbler ▫ Eastern Bluebird ▫ Northern Cardinal ▫ Eastern

Phoebe ▫ Eastern Wood-peewee ▫ Rock Pigeon ▫ Ruby-throated Hummingbird ▫ Eastern Meadowlark ▫ Red-bellied Woodpecker ▫ Northern Flicker ▫ Downy Woodpecker ▫ Wood Duck ▫ Mallard ▫ Chipping Sparrow ▫ Gray Catbird ▫ Black-capped Chickadee ▫ Mourning Dove ▫ American Crow ▫ Fish Crow ▫ American Goldfinch ▫ Canada Goose ▫ Blue Jay ▫ American Kestrel ▫ Belted Kingfisher ▫ White-breasted Nuthatch ▫ European Starling ▫ Chimney Swift ▫ Tufted Titmouse ▫ Eastern Towhee ▫ Turkey Vulture ▫ Carolina Wren ▫ Black Vulture ▫ Pileated Woodpecker ▫ Osprey ▫ Great Blue Heron ▫ Common Raven

- Mary Wiersema Vermeulen

BLUE RIDGE YOUNG BIRDERS CLUB NEWS

The Blue Ridge Young Birders Club is enjoying Fall Migration! We have field trips scheduled to various sites to look for migrating warblers, other songbirds, as well as raptors. We finished monitoring the Bluebird trail at PVCC. It was a very successful season and the young birders had so much fun monitoring the nest boxes.

We ask for your support: We are an affiliate with BOTH Eagle Optics and amazon.com. If you are in the market for new optics, or ordering from Amazon.com please first go to our website (www.blueridgeyoungbirders.org) and click on the Eagle Optics or Amazon link, then once on the website (eagle optics or Amazon) then find your item and order it. That way, the young birders will get a 5% commission. Or, if you are ordering on the phone from Eagle Optics, just say you are going through the Blue Ridge Young Birders. THANKS!

- Gabriel Mapel

2013 SEED SALE

Order deadline: October 13

Pick Up: October 19 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 food for all those Goldfinches, Chickadees, Titmice, Nuthatches, Woodpeckers, Wrens, Doves, and Sparrows – not to mention rarer winter visitors like Purple Finches and Pine Siskins. (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 abcseedsale@gmail.com or call Crista Cabe at 540-255-4677.

We need your help to get the word out: Please share the link and/or hand out flyers to friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, and members of your civic and religious organizations. Post to Facebook and Tweet about us. Help us bring in new customers!

A note about pricing: In just about every case we are able to offer prices that are on the low end of local availability, and lower than the best available online price (especially considering shipping costs). Prices are especially competitive for suet cakes, Squirrel Buster feeders, nyjer (thistle), peanuts, and sunflower chips. Please support our club's efforts.



-Grant Simmons & Crista Cabe

MEETING MINUTES

September 9, 2013

The Club was called to order by President Penny Warren meeting at Covenant Presbyterian church at 7:00 PM. When asked what people are seeing, Andrew reported seeing a Philadelphia Vireo.

She then introduced two recipients of our Scholarships to Nature Camp, Cady van Assendelft and Valerie Dorries. They shared regarding their studies and expressed their thanks to the Club for sending them.

Penny noted that upcoming field trips are listed in the Newsletter. Andrew Clem added that he has worked out plans for a trip to Sweet Briar this Friday, leaving at 8:00 AM from Afton. Also mentioned

was a trip by Jo King to McCormick's and Penny mentioned she will be leading a field trip to Natural Chimneys September 23. It was noted that Gabriel will lead a trip to Rip Rap September 28th.

Grant Simmons reported that the Seed Sale committee is preparing for the Annual Seed Sale with pick-up on October 19th. Orders would have to be in by the 11th. He encouraged the members to share information with their neighbors to enlist others into securing their bird seed from our Club. Crista Cabe shared that she will be emailing order blanks to those who have bought seed before as soon as we have the necessary information. She will also be setting up a payment system wherein persons can order online.

Vic Laubach stated that the Hawk Watch began operation August 15th. He shared that he has been a number of calls for education groups to visit and learn about Hawk migration. He invited us to visit the Watch this Saturday between 11:00 and 2:00 as they will be having Open House with Hot Dogs and drinks. Brenda Tekin who has been instrumental in the operation of the Watch will be present even though she is recovering from a serious illness. He noted there is a sign by the road indicating the location of the Watch that the Monticello Bird Club helped fund. The Rockingham Club is also one of the Watch sponsors. There is a new brochure regarding the Watch that our club has financed.

Vic than shared about a book, "The Warbler Guide" that he secured through Amazon that does a thorough presentation on Warblers. He urged members who buy anything through Amazon to go through the portal of our Young Birders club so that their Club gets a 5% donation.

Penny shared that Nature Tours is offering birding trips to Honduras and Belize consisting of seven days and nights at a cost of \$2200 per person. For each club member participating a \$200 refund would be given back to our club. Trips would take place in late winter and spring.

The Adventure Birding Company is offering trips to Arizona of 6 days for \$1975 during the month of August. In both cases all expenses are covered except travel. Penny has placed sheets on a side table for persons to indicate if they are interested.

No one responded to identifying the mystery bird.

Penny reported the News Leader has no interest in having someone to continue Yulee's column.

Bruce Dorries raised the question about using some commercial agencies to promote our Seed Sale. He also suggested we share the information with other conservation groups and ask them to promote the sale.

It was reported that there will be a talk on "Planting for Birds" at the Warm Springs Barn.

Andrew requested that any comments concerning YuLee be relayed to him and he would post them on our Web Page.

Peter Nebel then introduced Keith Carson; a resident of Highland County who presented a fascinating program on "Vultures of the Alleghany Highlands" Peter reported that the Vulture is his favorite bird.

Grant Simmons, Secretary

Bird Quiz!

Can you identify this bird?



The answer will be revealed next month.
Happy guessing!

Last Month: Junkin's Warbler, a Mourning-Kentucky hybrid!

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

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>

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Augusta Bird Club 2014 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)	\$15	\$25	\$30
Cardinal (Contributing)	\$25	\$35	\$40
Kingbird (Sustaining)	\$50	\$60	\$75

Augusta Bird Club
c/o Paul Callo
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