



THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 48, No.6
February 2014

*"Keep your faith in beautiful things; in the sun when it is hidden,
in the Spring when it is gone"*

~ Roy R. Gibson

FEBRUARY MEETING

Date: Monday, February 10th, 7:00 PM

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

Program: The Atlantic Puffin – More Than a
Life Bird

Speaker: Doug Rogers - President, Monticello
Bird Club

In June of 2013, Doug and his wife enrolled in the weeklong "Joy of Birding" class at Audubon's Hog Island Camp in Bremen, Maine. Their goal was to see the Atlantic Puffin, a life bird, and enjoy the learning experiences and adventures the Camp had to offer. They got three life birds during the trip and following the trip, Doug was so intrigued with the puffins he wanted to learn much more about them and the special challenges the species faces in today's world.

The forty minute presentation of narrative and slides moves quickly between its three parts: Part 1 is about the Atlantic Puffin; part 2 is a brief look at the history of Audubon's Pro-



ject Puffin on Hog Island, ME; part 3 is a look at the birds, adventures and experiences in the "Joy of Birding" Class.

PRE-MEETING DINNER

If you would like to participate in the pre-meeting dinner on Monday, Feb. 10th at 5:30 at Ma & Pa's Pizza, 2303 N. Augusta Street, please notify Ed Lawler, goshwak.abc@comcast.net, by noon on the day of the event.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, January 15th: Highland County
Meeting Place & Time: 7:30am Food Lion lower parking lot on N. Coalter St.
Coordinator: Allen Lerner
birdergonewild@yahoo.com

Join Allen Lerner on this adventure to look for wintering Golden Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks plus many more different species of birds. Who knows we may encounter a rare one! Bring snacks & dress for the weather. In case of rain or snow the trip will be cancelled. Contact Allen for more info.

Thursday, February 13th: Licking Hole Creek, Crozet
Meeting Place and Time: 8:00 a.m., Afton Inn, Hawk Watch parking lot
Coordinator: Penny Warren, 849-9245

Come along for a winter adventure to Licking Hole Creek and let's see what the mixed habitat

has to offer in February. We will be looking for waterfowl, hawks, sparrows, woodpeckers, maybe a Brown Creeper, etc. When we are done, we will head to the Mudhouse Coffee for a warming beverage and nosh and then head to Old Trail Golf and check out the pond and surrounding area and time permitting, our last stop will be at King Family Vineyard. We'll be back to Afton Inn by 12:30/1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 19th: Grand Caverns Regional Park, Grottoes

Meeting Place and Time: 8:00am at the Dollar General Shopping Center, Crimora or by 8:30 at the parking lot of Grand Caverns Park in Grottoes.

Coordinator: Gabriel Mapel,
birdmangabriel@yahoo.com

Join Gabriel on a morning walk to this location that includes a field, woods, a portion of the South River, a nice trail, Sparrows, Winter Wrens, Brown Creepers, Raptors, Waterfowl, and who knows what else. We will plan to finish up by noon. Time permitting, we may travel some back roads back to Crimora in search of Raptors, Horned Larks, Pipits, and if we get lucky a Lapland Longspur.

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

"Who'd a-thunk it?"



Three or perhaps four different Snowy Owls being seen in Rockingham and two on the same day this winter season who'd a-thunk it? I really never thought I would get to see a Snowy Owl unless I traveled significant distance to search for one so to have seen two in one day and, no less, in nearby Rockingham County was an amazing event!

The *90 second Naturalist* which airs on public radio did a segment on the Snowy Owl irruption recently and quoted one person as saying when you are out looking for a Snowy, look for something

that looks like a white Clorox bottle on top of fence posts!!

I was also reading about owls 'stockpiling' habits during breeding season and specifically how the males bring food to females. One book referenced a 1955 photo from Barrow, Alaska showing a Snowy Owl nest with eggs and hatching chicks surrounded by 83 brown lemmings!! I would say that was 'eating good in the neighborhood!'



Let's hope the Snowies stay a little while longer and all can enjoy this exquisite winter gift and that they return safely back north!

Penny Warren, President

GREEN ROOFS IN NEW YORK CITY



We know that the green areas in NYC, e.g. Central Park, etc., offer an invaluable stopover for many Neotropical migrants passing through New York while traveling along the Atlantic flyway. Over the past four years a Fordham University researcher has been studying the green roofs of New York and how significant of a role that they play in promoting biodiversity. The doctoral candidate studied 10 green roofs and adjacent traditional (tar, rock ballast or painted silver) roofs throughout New York's boroughs from April through August in 2011 and 2012. He visited once a week for several hours every morning recording species of birds and took specimens of arthropods. He found 26 of the 37 bird species turned up only on green roofs. Birds mentioned in the article as having been observed were flycatchers, magnolia warblers, peregrine falcons and surprise visitors including a woodcock

and a hummingbird ...nine stories up in the Bronx! His identification of half of the 20,000 arthropods he collected indicates that insect diversity is about six times greater on green roofs... a valuable food source for the birds.

The entire article, 'Wildlife Oases in a Concrete Jungle' can be found in the Feb/March 2014 issue of National Wildlife.

Penny Warren

REMINDER

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT February 14th-17th, 2014

Two programs sponsored by the club:

- **Saturday, February 8th, "Introductory Bird Walk"** at 9 AM at the Frontier Culture Museum parking lot.
- **Wednesday, February 12th, "Introduction to Backyard Bird Feeding and Bird Identification"** at 7 PM at the Staunton Public Library meeting room.

PRESIDENTIAL PETS

A friend of mine was reading a book about various animal species and related a story about President Andrew Jackson who had purchased an African Grey Parrot for his wife. The parrot outlived both of them and was present at President Jackson's funeral but had to be removed due to cussing in both Spanish and English!! I thought this might be an urban legend and did a little bit of research and ended up at the Presidential Pets Museum website and it says



'Here is a quote attributed to the Rev. William Menefee Norment, who was presiding at the service, and found in Volume 3 of Samuel G. Hiskell's *Andrew Jackson and Early Tennessee History*:

*"Before the sermon and while the crowd was gathering, a wicked parrot that was a household pet got excited and **commenced swearing so loud and long as to disturb the people and had to be carried from the house.**"*

So maybe it was true. They also provide a listing of the Presidents who had birds as a pet:

- [George Washington](#)'s wife had a parrot
- [Thomas Jefferson](#) had a mockingbird named Dick
- [James Madison](#)'s wife kept a macaw
- For a short time, [John Tyler](#) had a canary named Johnny Ty
- [Franklin Pierce](#) owned two Japanese birds
- [James Buchanan](#) is said to have had a pair of bald eagles
- [Abraham Lincoln](#)'s son Tad had a turkey named Jack
- [Ulysses S. Grant](#) reportedly had a parrot
- [Rutherford B. Hayes](#) apparently had a mockingbird and four canaries
- [Grover Cleveland](#)'s wife had mockingbirds and canaries too
- [William McKinley](#) had a Mexican parrot named Washington Post
- [Teddy Roosevelt](#) had a couple of parrots, and his son had a pet macaw
- [Woodrow Wilson](#) kept songbirds
- [Warren Harding](#)'s wife, Florence, had canaries
- [Calvin Coolidge](#)'s pet canaries were named Nip and Tuck; plus Coolidge had a white canary named Snowflake and a mockingbird
- For a short time, [Dwight Eisenhower](#) had a parakeet named Gabby, buried in 1957 at the southwest corner of the executive mansion
- [John F. Kennedy](#) had a canary named Robin and two parakeets named Bluebell and Marybelle
- [Lyndon Johnson](#) had lovebirds



It has been nearly 46 years since a pet bird called the White House home.

Penny Warren

61 TONS OF ROBINS

We think we know robins pretty well. Red-breasted birds of spring that tug earthworms from the ground. [They nest in the back yard, and gather, we think, in small flocks to feed in trees with berries.]

Perhaps less well known is that, in winter, flocks of American Robins spend the night together. Usually a few dozen to a few hundred birds roost communally in trees or an old barn, or under a bridge. Larger robin roosts can number in the thousands, or even tens of thousands of birds!

A remarkable number -- until we consider the scene near St. Petersburg, Florida during the winter of 2007. Observers here counted robins arriving in late afternoon to roost on an island of dense mangrove trees. For two and a half hours, the stunned census-takers watched a steady stream of robins flying overhead. [Wing flaps] Based on the rate of birds passing by per second, a conservative estimate was 720,000 robins. If the average robin weighs 2.7 ounces, that was nearly 61 tons of robins!



The previous year, the same roost hosted a mere 42,000 robins. In 2007, it was likely snow and ice to the north and west that pushed these legions of robins to Florida.

And we thought we knew robins!

Bob Sundstrom for BirdNote®
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ABC MEETING MINUTES

January 13th, 2014

The Augusta Bird Club met at 7:00 p.m. on January 13th, 2014 at Covenant Presbyterian Church. President Penny Warren opened the meeting by welcoming new members and guests. Penny announced that Allen Lerner would be leading a field trip to Highland County on Saturday, January 18. Penny asked anyone going to please email Al-

len of your joining him at 7:30 a.m., in the parking lot of Food Lion on Coalter Street.

Gabriel Maple spoke on the Blue Ridge Young Birders Club doing fundraising projects to help their club by selling their calendar and sponsoring a "January Challenge". A sign-up sheet was passed around for anyone wanting to support his club.

Penny passed along a message from Allen concerning the Quarry at Sheets' in Fishersville. It was noted that there are several "No Trespassing" signs posted and everyone should obey the owners' request. Penny also mentioned that inquires would be made to see if club birders could get special permission to bird the area.

Penny encouraged ABC members to help promote the Great Backyard Bird Count, February 14th-17th, 2014. This is the 15th year of this count. As a way to encourage public participation, Darrell Schwalm and Penny will be conducting an, "Introductory Bird Walk" on Saturday, February 8 at 9 AM at the Frontier Culture Museum parking lot. Darrell and Penny will also give a program at the Staunton Public Library meeting room on Wednesday, February 12, "Introduction to Backyard Bird Feeding and Bird Identification" at 7 PM.

It was noted that there are now two Snowy Owls in Rockingham County.

Peter Nebel introduced the evening program. Three topics on eBird Apps, Digi-scoping and Point-and-shoot were appropriately presented. Vic Laubach's presentation on eBird applications was most intriguing and enjoyable. Brenda's experience with digi-scoping was very well received and Peter's expertise with digital point-and-shoot was most engaging.

Respectfully submitted,
Josephine King, substituting secretary



TREASURER'S REPORT
 12/01/2013 – 12/31/2013
 as submitted by Lisa S. Hamilton

REGULAR OPERATING FUND		
BALANCE – 12/01/2013	\$ 6,296.39	
INCOME	\$ 292.35	
EXPENSES	\$ 290.94	
BALANCE – 12/31/2013		\$ 6,297.80
EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND		
BALANCE – 12/01/2013	\$ 21,951.94	
INCOME	\$ 219.40	
EXPENSES	\$ 979.51	
BALANCE - 12/31/2013		\$21,191.83
TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 12/31/2013		\$27,489.63

BIRD QUIZ!
 Can you identify this bird?



The answer will be revealed next month.
 Happy guessing!

Last Month: Inca Wren (*Pheugopedius eisenmanni*)

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

Augusta Bird Club Website
www.augustabirdclub.org