



# THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 48, No.7  
March 2014

*"Over the woodlands brown and bare, Over the harvest-fields forsaken,  
Silent, and soft, and slow descends the snow"*

~ Longfellow

## MARCH MEETING

**Date:** Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 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 Project 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. 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 at Ma & Pa's Pizza, 2303 N. Augusta Street, please notify Ed Lawler, [goshwak.abc@comcast.net](mailto:goshwak.abc@comcast.net), by noon on the day of the event.

## FIELD TRIPS

**Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>:** McCormick's Mill  
**Meeting Place & Time:** 8:30 am, McDonald's  
Parking Lot at the Staunton Mall or at the Mill by  
9:00 am.

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

Join Jo King on this early spring walk around the Marl Creek Trail where she hopes to see many returning spring migrants. Waterfowl, sparrows, chickadees, kinglets and bluebirds are likely to be identified. Dress for the weather and bring a snack of your liking. This trip will conclude around 11 am. Please note: this trip will be offered again on Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup>:** Grand Caverns Regional Park  
**Meeting Place & Time:** 8:00am at the Dollar General Shopping Center in Crimora or at the Grand Caverns Park in Grottoes at 8:20am

**Coordinator:** Gabriel Mapel,  
[birdmangabriel@yahoo.com](mailto:birdmangabriel@yahoo.com)

Join Gabriel on a return trip to see what has come into Grand Caverns Park in a month's time after our successful walk in February. We'll bird for roughly two hours or so. We will be searching for sparrows, Winter Wrens, creepers, woodpeckers, raptors, waterfowl, as well as perhaps some early returning migrants such as Pine Warblers.

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**Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup>:** Natural Chimneys  
**Meeting Place and Time:** 8:00 a.m., Big Lots, W. Beverley St.,  
**Coordinator:** Penny Warren, 849-9245

Let's explore Natural Chimneys late March and see who has returned to this corner of Augusta County. Some spring wildflowers may be blooming as well. We will check out other roads and ponds on our return to Staunton. Back to Staunton by noon.

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### THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH *"Cruisin' the Glades"*

In the cold, wintry days of January I headed to Naples, FL to visit friends and to do a little birding. My research found an opportunity that sounded very unique, a three person boat tour with Capt. Dave Hunt in an area of the Everglades National Park where few birders go. My friend and I drove to Florida City to spend the night and to meet up with Dave early the next morning. We awoke to



pouring rain and our hearts sank momentarily thinking our trip would not take place! A phone call or two later with Dave, who was keeping an eye on the radar and Doppler maps, thought it would blow over by the time we arrived to the marina which

was more than an hour drive into the park. We decided to go for it with the worse case being we would turn around at the marina and scrap the trip. Fortunately, when we arrived the rain indeed had stopped!



Off we went and immediately had our first 'scoop' of approximately 200 skimmers. Wow! What a beautiful sight! The early morning was filled with many Great, Little, and Snowy Egrets, Ospreys, Herons, White and Brown Pelicans, to name a few. Our goal was to get to an area of mud flat islands about 12 miles west of where we started. We passed by in the distance the island that inspired the writing of the book "Death in the Everglades, the Murder of Guy Bradley, America's First Martyr to Environmentalism." Stopping along our way we checked out the flora and fauna and finding various creatures like the Mangrove Tree Snail and keeping our eye out for the endangered Florida crocodile. We were most fortunate to see one croc on our return leg ....such a happy-looking, dainty creature!! Getting to the mudflats, we were thrilled to see oodles of Roseate Spoonbills, various plovers and sandpipers, Royal and Forster's Terns, Short-billed Dowitchers, Dunlins, Whimbrels, Willets and the target bird, a Long-billed Dowitcher (life bird)!

The final treat of the day was to witness bottle-nose dolphins doing their 'mud-ringing' hunting strategy that is unique to this particular spot in the world! It is an amazing sight.

What a wonderful experience in the Everglades thanks to Capt. Dave!

Happy Spring Birding everyone!

Penny Warren, President

## CLUB HISTORIAN

After many years as serving as the club's historian, Mary Vermulean has resigned. We thank her for her long term efforts and everything she has done for the club!! Please share a thank you with Mary when you see her.

The board is seeking someone to fill the position of historian and to help in taking the record keeping into the digital age. If you would like to help or like more information, please speak to one of the board members.

Thank you!

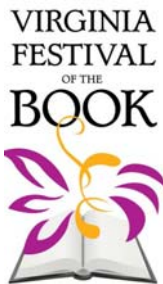
Penny Warren

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



The club's spring annual birding and brunch get together will be a spring picnic this year at Natural Chimneys on May 4th at 3:00 p.m. More details to follow.

## FESTIVAL OF THE BOOK



Joy Kiser, author of *America's Other Audubon*, will be participating in the Festival of the Book, Charlottesville, on Friday afternoon, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 2:00 p.m., UVA Harrison Institute/Small Special Collections, UVA Central Grounds, 160 McCormick Road.

Some of you may recall that I did a book review of *America's Other Audubon* for our club newsletter

last year and organized a field trip to UVA to see a copy of the original work.

It should be an enjoyable presentation. If you need further information, please contact me.

- Penny Warren

## NEW MIGRATION RECORD ESTABLISHED

A gender-bending Scottish bird migrated 16,000 miles, breaking the record for longest European bird migration.

The epic round-trip journey, undertaken by a Red-necked Phalarope, took the well-traveled bird across two oceans. The bird flew from the island of Fetlar in Shetland, Scotland, across the Atlantic, south down the eastern seaboard of the United States, across the Caribbean, and Mexico, ending up off the coast of Peru. After wintering in the Pacific, it returned following a similar route. Scientists tracked the red-necked phalarope's travels using a geolocator device that weighs less than a paperclip. Ten of the birds were outfitted with the device while on the Scottish isle. The researchers couldn't believe how long and far the birds traveled. The scientists conducted the study just trying to figure out where the birds spent the winter. Little did they know that these were world-class fliers.



The Red-necked Phalarope had already captured the attention of researchers, but for another reason. It turns the table on tradition gender roles. During the summer, male birds can be found incubating eggs and raising young. At the same time, the female birds are out strutting their stuff, showing off their brightly colored plumage in hopes of attracting new partners.

-Thayne Maynard

## BIRDS RETURN WITH THE LIGHT

The naturalist John Hay asks, "Is it not possible to follow the light through the medium of a bird? Without them, the days would go by without definition." Sometimes it does feel as if we'll never emerge from a featureless murk of dark days. But winter's weak light is finally beginning to strengthen, and some birds, long absent, have begun their journey north, coming back to us. Here's



what to look and listen for, as we approach the time when day and night are equal. Look for the return of Tree Swallows, with their metallic blue-green backs, white throats, and notched tails. Ornithologist David Allen Sibley describes their song as "a repeated series of clear, sweet whistled phrases."

This month also brings phoebes – Eastern Phoebes east of the Rockies, and Say's Phoebes in the West. Bluebirds are arriving, too, both Eastern and Western. And they're all looking for cavities in which to nest.

So be of good cheer, the birds – and Spring – are coming back.

Todd Peterson for BirdNote®  
 Producer: John Kessler  
 Executive Producer: Chris Peterson

## ABC MEETING MINUTES

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Penny Warren, president called the meeting to order at Covenant Church at 7:00 pm by welcoming guests. She then asked for bird sightings with the Red Necked Grebe and Long Tailed Duck having been seen along with a Clay Colored Sparrow and White Winged Scoter.

She reported that 6 people responded to the ad in the paper and participated in the Bird Walk at the Frontier Museum. The next program will be at the Library on Wednesday at 7:00 pm. She noted the Great Back Yard Bird Count is this coming weekend and encouraged members to participate.

President Warren announced she will be leading a walk to Licking Hole Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting at Afton at 8:00 am. Gabriel has scheduled a walk at Grand Caverns Wednesday the 19<sup>th</sup>, meeting at Crimora at 8:00 or at the Caverns at 8:30 am.

Penny stated that items for the Newsletter need to be in the editor by the 29<sup>th</sup>. She also shared that there is a Rusty Blackbird blitz in March. As to the mystery bird in the Newsletter it was a British bird, a Tit.

Ed Lawler introduced Kevin Shank, the presenter for the evening by telling about the Albino Hummingbird in his back yard last year, stating that Kevin Shank took pictures which got him considerable attention. Kevin than shared how he got started photographing birds in flight. He showed numerous pictures of owls in flight with special attention to a Screech Owl taking a mouse that he placed on a stump.

In addition he informed us his family produces the Nature Friends Magazine and shared a copy with members. In response to questions he shared regarding the equipment he and his sons use to capture the owls in flight.

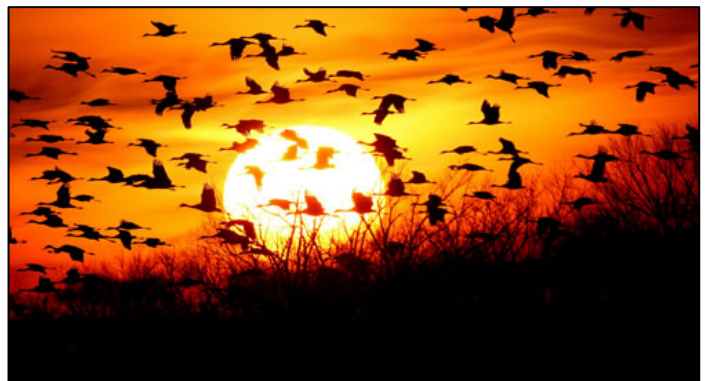
Respectfully submitted,  
 Grant Simmons, Secretary

## TREASURER'S REPORT

1/01/2014 – 1/31/2014

as submitted by Lisa S. Hamilton

<b>REGULAR OPERATING FUND</b>		
BALANCE – 1/01/2014	\$ 6,297.80	
INCOME	\$ 207.35	
EXPENSES	\$ 67.12	
<b>BALANCE – 1/31/2014</b>		<b>\$ 6,438.19</b>
<b>EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND</b>		
BALANCE – 1/01/2014	\$ 21,191.83	
INCOME	\$ 115.00	
EXPENSES	\$ 0.00	
<b>BALANCE - 1/31/2014</b>		<b>\$21,306.83</b>
<b>TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 1/31/2014</b>		<b>\$27,745.02</b>



## BIRD QUIZ!

Can you identify this bird?



The answer will be revealed next month.  
Happy guessing!

## Last Month: Green-backed Tit (*Parus monticolus*)

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

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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/49rjg>  
Rockingham County: <http://g.co/maps/3xutb>  
Albemarle County: <http://g.co/maps/7t6f4>