



THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 49, No.5
January 2015

*"The stiff rails were softened to swan's-down
and still fluttered down the snow"*

~ Lowell

JANUARY MEETING

Date: Monday, January 12th, 7:00 PM

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

Program: Effect of Climate Change on Birds
Speaker: Leslie Grady, Jr.

Climate change impacts birds in a number of ways, from changing habitat suitability to influencing migratory times and patterns. In this talk Dr. Grady will explore the various influences of climate change on birds and then examine the changes we can expect in the behavior of migratory birds in our area over the next several years. Studies done by both the U.S. Forest Service and the National Audubon Society will be used to illustrate this outcomes.



Dr. Grady is a licensed professional engineer (retired) who taught environmental engineering at Purdue and Clemson Universities and engaged in private practice with CH2M Hill, the world's largest environmental engineering consulting firm. Since his retirement in 2003 he has devoted much of his time to the study of climate science and the question of global warming.

Questions and comments will be welcomed throughout the session.

The pre-meeting dinner with this month's speaker will be at Ma and Pa's Pizza, 2303 N. August St. (Comcast Plaza), in Staunton, at 5:30PM. Please email or phone Peter Nebel (nebelpk@yahoo.com or 540-942-0946) before 1PM on the day of the meeting if you wish to attend the dinner.

FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, January 11th: 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. Based on the latest reports there is no telling what we might find! Bring snacks and dress for the weather that day. We will stop and have lunch. In case of rain or snow the trip will be cancelled. Contact Allen for more info.



THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

Winter Treats

With the snowfall immediately proceeding Thanksgiving, it brought in a bounty of waterfowl. Allen had left a message that Tundra Swans were on Bell's Lane and I did a quick dash to catch sight of them before their departure. It was a lovely, transitory moment with the fresh snow and hundreds of ducks and especially so with the accent of small ballet of Tundra Swans making their muffled 'bugle' notes while floating back and forth on the pond. Had I not been pressed for time, I would have enjoyed taking in the sights and sounds for much longer. It was a delightful prelude to the upcoming winter season.



The club's first CBC was held on December 14th. Two 'owling' teams set forth in the wee hours of the morning. In addition to garnering a few owls (Barn, Screech and Great Horned), we were treated to an additional wonder of the night, the Geminid meteor shower. It was a beautiful stellar icing to the cake! With sunrise and beautiful clear, blue skies showing themselves, we knew it was too beautiful of a day for great birding!!! Where was some bad weather to bring in more birds!?!? What unfolded for the day gave us 75 species with some interesting sightings and a few records for the day including 3 Cackling Geese, a Merlin, four Barn Owls tied the 2011 and 1971 records, Common Merganser (6), Red-shouldered Hawk (14), American Kestrel (36) and Winter Wren (9).



Many, many thanks to the members of the club who participated in the local 48th CBC.

With the holiday season nearing its end, the fragrance of paper whites and scents of cedar and pine are fading but not the gratitude for all of the blessings and memories of the season! I wish everyone the best in the upcoming new year!

Penny Warren, President

BIRDNOTE®

Northern Forest Owls: Are They Coming South This Winter?

Of all the surprises the upcoming winter might bring, among the most wonderful would be a grand influx of northern forest owls.

Every few years, a surprising number of magnificent forest owls move south from the boreal forest of Canada and Alaska into the northern tier of states, especially the northern Midwest. It's likely because of a big decline in their normal rodent prey.

Huge Great Gray Owls, more than two feet tall with intense yellow eyes. Northern Hawk Owls, long-tailed and streamlined, hunting from an open perch like a falcon. And shy Boreal Owls, hardly ever seen unless they show up in someone's backyard or the neighborhood park during one of these special winters.



Birders call these owl-laden winter events "flight years" or "invasions," while scientists call them irruptions – movements of large numbers of birds after the breeding season into areas beyond their normal range. February of 2013 delivered a sensational owl irruption to northern Minnesota. Many irruption years are followed by what is known as an "echo effect" -- another, if somewhat smaller, influx of northern owls.

Will this be an echo year? Stay tuned!

*Written by Bob Sundstrom
Producer: John Kessler
Executive Producer: Chris Peterson*

**18th ANNUAL
GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**
February 13th-16th, 2015

Mark your calendars; The Great Backyard Bird Count is coming soon!

Participation is fun and easy. **First**, if you don't already have an eBird account create a GBBC account on the web at www.birdcount.org. **Second**, you count birds for at least 15 minutes during one or more times during the count period, and **finally**, you enter your list online at www.birdcount.org.

Like last year, we hope that ABC members will help promote the GBBC as a community educational and outreach initiative. The count is a fun, educational family activity. It's also a way to get kids outside in nature. Educational materials are available online including posters, and tips for spotting and identifying birds.

This is perhaps the easiest international citizen science project in which people can participate. It is the 18th annual count, and it is expanding every year. In 2013 over 134,000



counts were reported on 34.5 million bird observations in 111 different countries from all seven continents. These data provided "the most detailed, four-day snapshot of global bird populations ever taken". A record 638 species of birds were recorded in the U.S. These data provide information on the location and size of bird populations from which patterns and changes in populations can be calculated.

For more details check out the official website at www.birdcount.org

90 Second Naturalist
Blue Penguins



Fairy penguins from Australia and New Zealand are the smallest penguins on Earth, weighing less than 1kg. They are also known as little blue penguins.

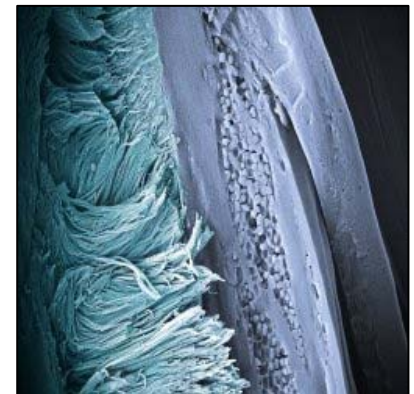
And it ends up they have a special protein structure in their feathers that generates the blue

color by reflecting light in a way that has never been seen in feathers before.

For the last 30 years only two ways of making a non-iridescent blue feather were known, both which depend on holes in a spongy-like matrix of a protein called beta-keratin. The pores in the matrix trap and reflect light in the blue color range. However, in the blue penguin feathers, the beta-keratin is aligned into parallel fibers, like a row of hairs. The alignment and size of the fibers scatters the light and reflects those in the blue pigment range. This is the first time this organizational structure has been seen to produce color in feathers.

Researchers examined how these filaments scattered light and X-rays to determine what the structures look like and figure out how they were producing the blue color.

They saw that the structure was highly organized; it looked a lot different than the spongy, disordered keratin structures that have been observed to create



colors in other feathers. Hundreds of the fibers line up side by side in the cells that make up the feather's barbs — the silky fibers that branch off of the quill.

TREASURER'S REPORT
11/01/2014 – 11/30/2014
as submitted by Lisa S. Hamilton

REGULAR OPERATING FUND		
BALANCE – 11/01/2014	\$ 4,693.96	
INCOME	\$ 510.99	
EXPENSES	\$ 299.66	
BALANCE – 11/30/2014		\$ 4,905.29
EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND		
BALANCE – 11/01/2014	\$ 21,430.99	
INCOME	\$ 203.80	
EXPENSES	\$ 1,129.39	
BALANCE - 11/30/2014		\$20,525.40
TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 11/30/2014		\$25,430.69



BIRD QUIZ!
Can you identify this bird?



The answer will be revealed next month.
Happy guessing!

Last Month: Horned Screamer (*Anhima cornuta*)

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

