



# THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 49, No.7  
March 2015

*"Come forth into the light of things:  
let nature be your teacher."*

~ Wordsworth

## **MARCH MEETING**

**Date:** Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM

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

**Program:** The Importance of Bobwhite Quail  
Management

**Speaker:** Justin Folks

Justin Folks will talk about bobwhite quail, their habitat and ways to manage quail habitat. Many more species that are also in trouble benefit from quail management, and Justin will fill you in on the details.



Justin Folks is from Staunton, VA. He received his undergraduate degree in Biology and Environmental Science from Bridgewater College in 2007 and received a Master's Degree in Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M-Kingsville in 2012 where he stud-

ied white-tailed deer. Justin is currently one of five Private Lands Wildlife Biologists in Virginia who provide free technical assistance to landowners interested in managing bobwhite quail habitat as part of Virginia's Bobwhite Quail Recovery Initiative. Justin's position is jointly-funded by Virginia Tech, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. He is married to his wife of 7 years, Dana, has a 20 month-old son, Barrett, and they expecting another boy in April.

## **PRE-MEETING DINNER New Location!**

The pre-meeting dinner with this month's speaker will be at The Staunton Abbey Taphouse, 2221 N. Augusta St. (Terry Court Shopping Center), in Staunton, at 5:30PM. Given this is our first time at the Abbey and the group seating is a bit more limited than prior restaurants, a RSVP would be most appreciated. Please email or phone Peter Nebel ([nebelpk@yahoo.com](mailto:nebelpk@yahoo.com) or 540-942-0946) before 1PM on the day of the meeting if you wish to attend the dinner.





## FIELD TRIPS

**Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>:** Boxerwood Gardens, Lexington

**Meeting Place & Time:** Food Lion, North Coalter Street, 7:30 a.m.

**Coordinator:** Penny Warren  
([penny@staunton.com](mailto:penny@staunton.com))

Join Penny for a spring morning exploration of Boxerwood Gardens in Lexington. The Gardens offer wonderful, mixed habitat of woodlands, wetlands and meadows with a variety of native trees and shrubs. If time permits, we may take in some more birding on our return to Staunton. Back to Staunton by noonish.

## THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH *Spring Forward?*

Over the past several weeks, I have been eagerly anticipating getting set up with new bluebird boxes on Bell's Lane. After requesting approval from both the land owners and the city of Staunton, I submitted a grant to the Virginia Bluebird Society for new, proper boxes that include Noel guards and 'stove-pipe' predator guards for the Bell's Lane bluebird trail and funds were awarded! At the moment as I write this column, it is hard to imagine any birds returning for spring, let alone nesting as I

look out the window with at least a foot of snow on the ground! I looked at my bird journal from last year and at this time I was cleaning out and preparing the bluebird boxes. We may not be done yet because I also noted from last year, there was a significant early March snowfall.

Thanks in advance to Darrell who is at the ready not only to pick up all of the boxes, guards, etc. near Charlottesville but also to install the boxes. Hopefully the proper boxes will enhance greater success for the bird occupants on Bell's!

With thoughts of spring.....

Penny Warren, President



## WANTED... VOLUNTEERS

We will need some extra hands off and on throughout the VSO Annual Meeting at Wintergreen, May 8-10. More details on specific times and activities will be forthcoming. In the interim, if you know you will be attending and if you can help, please inform Penny Warren ([penny@staunton.com](mailto:penny@staunton.com)).

Thank You!!!!

## BIRDNOTE®

### Theodore Roosevelt, Presidential Birder

Of all American Presidents, just one might have halted the playing of "Hail to the Chief" so he could listen to an Orchard Oriole singing outside the White House.

Any guesses which one? Here's a hint: his face is carved on Mt. Rushmore.

It's Theodore Roosevelt, an avid naturalist and bird observer from an early age. His very first publication was a list of 97 summer birds he'd seen in the Adirondack Mountains, published by the prestigious Linnaean Society. And he was only 19!

(<http://bit.ly/1DvCdZr>)

He loved bird songs. As a boy, he even developed his own system for transcribing them.

Roosevelt was truly "the conservation president" at a time when the country really needed one. During his presidency, 1901 to 1908, he helped establish 51 preserves for birds, five national parks, 18 national monuments, and 150 national forests.

(<http://bit.ly/1APQPEq>)

*"Birds should be saved for utilitarian reasons; and, moreover, they should be saved because of reasons unconnected with dollars and cents. A grove of giant redwoods or sequoias should be kept just as we keep a great and beautiful cathedral. The extermination of the passenger-pigeon meant that mankind was just so much poorer.... And to lose the chance to see frigate-birds soaring in circles above the storm, or a file of pelicans winging their way homeward across the crimson afterglow of the sunset, or a myriad of terns flashing in the bright light of midday as they hover in a shifting maze above the beach-why, the loss is like the loss of a gallery of the masterpieces of the artists of old time."*

- **A Book-Lover's Holidays in the Open (1916)**

But, busy as he was, the birder president took time to list 91 bird species he saw – or heard – on the White House grounds, including that Orchard Oriole. (<http://bit.ly/1vEIYeJ>)

*Written by Bob Sundstrom, Todd Peterson, Ellen Blackstone, Frances Wood, and Dennis Paulson*

*Producer: John Kessler*

*Executive Producer: Chris Peterson*



## 2015 EARTH DAY STAUNTON PROGRAMS

The theme this year for Earth Day Staunton is 'starry nights.' There are a number of events scheduled that will extend the observance of Earth Day from the end of March through the later part of April. These events have to do with programs on night light pollution, stargazing, bats, and owls. Support for these programs by ABC members is most welcomed. The contact for additional information is our Earth Day Committee Representative, Darrell Schwalm, at 885-0015.

**March 26 , Mary Baldwin College** -- Shanil Varina will present a program on Starry Night for the Shenandoah Valley Stargazer Club.

**Wednesday, April 8, Staunton Public Library, 7 pm** -- The film, The City Dark, will be shown.

**Tuesday, April 14. Frontier Culture Museum, 7 pm** -- Stars in the Night Sky program and telescope viewing by the Shenandoah Valley Stargazer Club.

**Thursday, April 16, Frontier Culture Museum, 7 pm** -- Rick Reynolds, Biologist, VADGIF will provide a presentation on "What's Happening to Our Bats?: The biology and conservation of our furry night fliers." Learn about these mysterious night-fliers, the 'White-Nose Syndrome' that is killing large numbers of bats, and how to build bat house to help these important animals of our 'Starry Nights.'

**Saturday, April 18, Downtown Staunton on Byers St. and Sunspots Pavilion** -- Earth Day Staunton exhibits and entertainment.



**Saturday, April 18, 1-5 pm** -- Self-guided Solar Home Tour, Staunton and Augusta County sponsored by Solarize Augusta.

**Saturday, April 18, Blue Ridge Community College, 7 pm** -- Wild Virginia's Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival.

**Sunday, April 19, Bells Lane, 1-5 pm** -- Kites and Critters family event sponsored by Valley Conservation Council.

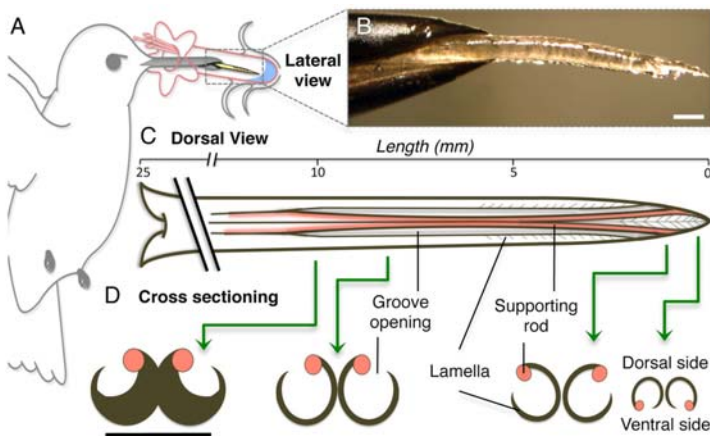
**Thursday, April 23, Montgomery Hall Park 7:30 pm** -- Presentation by John Sparh on Owls: Birds of Mystery and Majesty sponsored by the ABC.

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### 90 SECOND NATURALIST *Hummingbird Sweet Tooth*

Nectar-slurping hummingbirds clearly have a taste for sweets — but they shouldn't. Like all other birds, they lack sweet-taste receptors on their palates and long tongues, so in theory, they should be immune to the temptations of sugary foods.

However, new research reveals why hummingbirds feast freely on nectar: At some point in their evolution, the birds transformed a taste receptor that's typically used to detect savory flavors into one that's used to taste sweets instead.

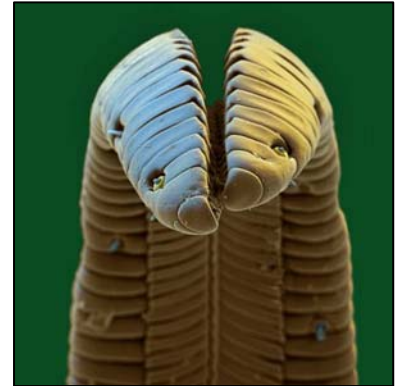


Hummingbirds are constantly wavering between a sugar rush and starvation. Their metabolisms are hyperactive, their hearts can beat 20 times a second, and they often need to eat more than their body weight in food each day to stay alive.

The small birds eat the occasional insect, but they largely subsist on nectar from flowers, which is not a typical source of food for most other birds. As

a result, hummingbirds have been able to carve out a distinct environmental niche. The birds can now be found throughout North and South America, in habitats ranging from high altitude mountains in the Andes to tropical rainforests, and they're quite diverse. They have split into more than 300 species in the estimated 42 million years since they parted from their closest relative, the insect-eating swift.

To figure out what made hummingbirds like sweets despite their lack of the sweet-taste receptor, researchers cloned the genes for taste receptors from omnivorous chickens, insectivorous swifts and nectarivorous hummingbirds.



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### DATES TO REMEMBER

#### *Mark Your Calendar*

April 18  
Earth Day

April 19  
Kites and Critters (rain date 4/26)

May 2  
Riverfest

May 8-10  
VSO Annual Meeting

May 16  
Annual Club Birding & Brunch  
Natural Chimneys Park, 8:00 a.m.

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### ABC MEETING MINUTES

*February 9, 2015*

President Penny Warren called the meeting to order at the Covenant Presbyterian Church at 7:00 by welcoming Patti Ruem, and guests Debra Obenschain and Bobbie Knott.

She reminded the club of the Great Back Yard bird count this coming weekend (February 13-15) and encouraged us to join in. She announced that a rain date for the scheduled Kites and Critters on April 19<sup>th</sup> will be the following weekend April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Also there will be a Kayaking trip on April 25<sup>th</sup> for interested persons.

John Downing then shared with the club a gold plated plate made in England of bird paintings valued at \$100. He noted the plates have been displayed in the White House.

Gabriel Mapel reported that the young birders met their challenge of identifying 236 species in several states with 163 of those in Virginia during January.

Patti Reum from Highland County along with Dan Bieker presented a short program on the installation of Kestrel Bird Houses. They stated the numbers of Kestrels in our area has decreased partly due to a lack of housing. So they are in the process of building and installing houses in suitable locations. They started in Albemarle county and now are installing them in Highland County with over 40 already in place. They have houses available to those who want to install one in a suitable location.

Peter Nebel then introduced Calvin Jordan who works for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality as our presenter for the evening. He has been studying the mercury solution on the South River. DuPont was using Mercury in its plant from 1929 to 1950 prior to knowing the dangers of Mercury. As a result the Mercury has shown up in the South River and has contaminated the fish. He shared what his agency is doing to measure the extent of contamination.

He also shared the work done by Dan Cristol of William and Mary showing the damage to birds who have digested mercury by eating contaminated insects.

After taking questions the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Grant Simmons, Secretary

### ARE YOUR BIRDS HUNGRY?

The club still has 1 Squirrel Buster Bird Feeder, Nigger seed and Suet left from the annual seed sale. Please contact Grant Simmons if you are interested. ([grantdws@comcast.net](mailto:grantdws@comcast.net))

### BIRD QUIZ!

Can you identify this bird?



The answer will be revealed next month.  
Happy guessing!

**Last Month: Lark Bunting**  
**(*Calamospiza melanocorys*)**

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)

### TREASURER'S REPORT

1/01/2015 – 1/31/2015

as submitted by Lisa S. Hamilton

<b>REGULAR OPERATING FUND</b>		
BALANCE – 1/01/2015	\$ 5,238.52	
INCOME	\$ 406.12	
EXPENSES	\$ 78.98	
<b>BALANCE – 1/31/2015</b>		<b>\$ 5,565.66</b>
<b>EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND</b>		
BALANCE – 1/01/2015	\$ 20,126.40	
INCOME	\$ 30.00	
EXPENSES	\$ 45.00	
<b>BALANCE - 1/31/2015</b>		<b>\$20,111.40</b>
<b>TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 1/31/2015</b>		<b>\$25,677.06</b>

Augusta Bird Club Website  
[www.augustabirdclub.org](http://www.augustabirdclub.org)