



# THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 49, No.9  
May 2015

*"Those little nimble musicians of the air, that warble forth their curious ditties,  
with which nature hath furnished them to the shame of art."*

~ Izaak Walton

## APRIL MEETING

**Date:** Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 AM

**Place:** Natural Chimneys Regional Park  
94 Natural Chimneys Lane  
Mount Solon, VA 22843

**Program:** Birding & Brunch

On Saturday morning, May 16<sup>th</sup>, we will be having our annual May gathering. Like last year we will be congregating at Natural Chimneys. We will bird for an hour or so and then gather for food about 9:00 or so. The club will provide drinks, plates and utensils. We are asking everyone to bring a dish to share. Feel free to bring your families.



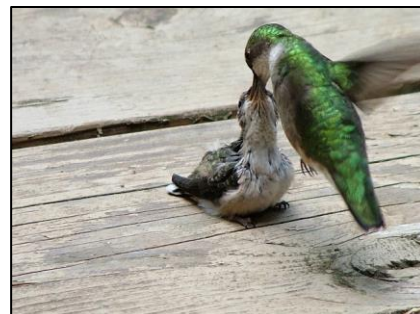
## FIELD TRIPS

**Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>:** McCormick's Mill  
**Meeting Time & Place:** 8:30 am, McDonalds' Parking Lot at Staunton Mall or 9:00 am at the Mill.  
**Coordinator:** Jo King at [kingbird10@yahoo.com](mailto:kingbird10@yahoo.com) or [540-430-0186](tel:540-430-0186)

Come join Jo on a 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. The trip will conclude around 11 AM. We can also check out the activity at Willow Lake in Rockbridge County.

**Monday, May 4th, Monday, May 11th and Friday, May 15th:** Bells Lane  
**Meeting Time & Place:** 8:00 a.m., Bells Lane lower entrance near VDOT  
**Coordinator:** Penny Warren, [penny@staunton.com](mailto:penny@staunton.com)

Penny Warren will lead three walks on Bells Lane to see what spring migration might provide. Walks will be about two miles round trip and last for about two hours.



## THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

### *Earth Week Wrap Up*

The month of April was filled with many wonderful Earth Day events that were well received and well attended. Two programs sponsored by the bird club "What's Happening to Our Bats?" with DGIF biologist, Rick Reynolds, attracted 32 people and John Spahr's program, "Owls: Birds of Mystery and Majesty," drew a crowd of 45 with both events attracting families! Each of the programs was very informative and generated great Q&A at the end of the presentations.

We thank Rick and John for their time and sharing information on night time fliers! We also thank the Frontier Culture Museum and the Staunton Public Library for hosting various Earth Week events!



A new sign was installed on Bell's Lane with a chalkboard for individuals to note any nature sightings of the day whether it is a wildflower, bird, etc. and also there is space behind plexiglass doors to leave brochures or pamphlets. People have been leaving messages of 'thanks for the new blue bird boxes,' bird sightings and one person who used to live here and was visiting wrote an enthusiastic note about how awesome Bell's Lane is! Some plantings in and around the base of the sign will follow when consistent warmer temperatures are here! If you haven't seen it yet, go check it out ... and leave a message!

Wishing everyone great birding during the migration season and best wishes for a wonderful summer!

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!!!!

## 2015 VSO ANNUAL MEETING

A spectacular mountain-top setting and Blue Ridge avian specialties will make the 2015 VSO Annual Meeting a can't miss experience. Field trips along the ridges as well as down into the Rockfish and Shenandoah Valleys should yield unbeatable natural beauty — not to mention an excellent list and great company of fellow birders. Jointly hosting are the Augusta Bird Club and Monticello Bird Club. Our headquarters will be Wintergreen Resort.

The keynote speaker at the Saturday evening banquet will be Scott Weidensaul, internationally known author, naturalist and conservationist. A Pulitzer Prize nominee, his books cover a spectrum of topics from bird migration, to birding history, extinct species, and early American history. His articles have appeared in publications such as *Smithsonian*, *New York Times* and *Nature Conservancy*. He lectures widely and is an active field researcher, specializing in birds of prey and hummingbirds. His keynote address will be on **Project Snowstorm** a multi-state, collaborative effort to better understand the periodic irruptions of snowy owls into southern Canada and the U.S. [www.scottweidensaul.com](http://www.scottweidensaul.com)

On Friday evening, Dr. Marshall Faintich will introduce us to the birds of the Wintergreen and Nelson County. He is the author of *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Wintergreen*, and his wildlife photos have appeared in newspapers, magazines, web sites and presentations in Virginia and Maryland.

More information and lodging details can be viewed on the VSO website [www.virginiabirds.net](http://www.virginiabirds.net)

- John Spahr



## 2015 EARTH DAY STAUNTON

A beautiful day, great conservation exhibits, live owls on stage, and lots of people, especially kids. These factors resulted in a tremendously successful Earth Day Staunton event on Saturday, April 22 in downtown Staunton. And the Augusta Bird Club (ABC) was right in the middle of all the action with a display that included peanut butter pinecone feeders for the kids and bat house information for the adults. This was the ninth year of Staunton's Earth Day event, and each year it has grown to be bigger and better. It is now the most expansive and well-attended conservation outreach and education event in Staunton.

The 30+ exhibitors focused on a variety of conservation topics ranging from Appalachian Voices with musical CDs to Wild Virginia with information on National Forest advocacy. Seventeen of the exhibits had a hands-on activity for children. Parents were given a 'passport' that listed the children-friendly exhibits that included a space to get the passport stamped when the child did the activity. The children with a stamped passport could get a reward (books, Earth Day buttons, star maps, etc.).

Catherine and Peggy Kohus, and two former Nature Camp youth, Margot Flanders and Jenna Benzing, staffed the ABC exhibit. They started with pinecones and a large container of peanut butter mixed with birdseed, and had nothing left at the end. This is a popular activity for children, and they have lots of repeat customers each year. The bat box display in the ABC exhibit



*ABC exhibit and pinecone bird feeder activity*



also received much interest, and a bat enthusiast from Northern Virginia ([www.savelucythebat.org](http://www.savelucythebat.org)) who stopped by will be donating some bat boxes to ABC. The two live owl presentations by the Wildlife Center on the newly built stage and the live fish exhibit by the VA Dept. of Game and Land Fisheries were other very popular events and exhibits.

Part of the success of the event can be attributed to other Earth Day related programs that were organized in the weeks before and after the downtown event. They included well-attended programs on bats at the Frontier Culture Museum and an owl presented by John Spahr at the library. ABC organized and supported these programs.

- Darrell Schwalm, Conservation Chair

## 21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL PURPLE MARTIN FIELD DAY

Saturday, June 27, 2015

If you are interested in establishing or expanding a Purple Martin colony, attend this event. It starts at 10:00 A.M. at the farm of Merle and Lance Wood in Louisa County, Virginia (located between Richmond and Charlottesville).



Enjoy watching hundreds of these beautiful birds soaring and feeding their young while an expert tells you all about them. A nestbox trail tour to view bluebirds and Tree Swallows will begin at noon.

No registration is necessary. The event is free, but donations are appreciated to help cover expenses. Bring lawn chairs, binoculars, notepad, camera, and a picnic lunch to enjoy on the grounds. Drinks and snacks are provided.

The hosts request that guests do not bring pets.



For information and directions, visit the Purple Martin FieldDay website:

[www.purplemartinfieldday.org](http://www.purplemartinfieldday.org)

Contact Augusta Bird Club members, Ron and Priscilla Kingston

[kingston@cstone.net](mailto:kingston@cstone.net) or call 434-962-8232

## DATES TO REMEMBER

*Mark Your Calendar*

May 2  
Riverfest

May 8-10  
VSO Annual Meeting

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

## BLUEBIRD BOXES AT COMMUNITY GARDENS

There is something about bluebird boxes that make them a hot item. I was reminded of this when I removed the 16 old boxes from Bells Lane to make room for the new boxes. After refurbishing these old boxes by replacing any over-weathered wood parts, I began looking for new homes. It turned out to be an easy job.



The bulk of them, 13 boxes, went to Project Grows outside of Verona. I was at their gardens helping erect frames for greenhouses when I noticed some bluebirds flying around. The project is located along Berry Farm Rd at the corner of a large pasture-like field edged by a line of cedar and a small spring-fed stream. New seedling trees had been planted along the tree-line to improve the riparian buffer between the stream and the planted areas. Most bird boxes were located along the edge of the riparian buffer. Follow-up reports indicated that the boxes are being quickly occupied.

The remaining boxes are to be placed in the garden at the Virginia School of the Deaf and Blind in Staunton. The garden is operated by the Allegheny Mountain School (AMS) that was founded in 2011 as an intensive, hands-on, cooperative, experiential learning and training program. Their program is designed to teach members of our communities to grow and prepare their own food and to understand the nutritional benefits of eating seasonally.

## ABC MEETING MINUTES

*April 13, 2015*

Meeting at the Covenant Presbyterian Church President Penny Warren called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. She introduced visitors Steve Golladay and Kay Menk and asked for bird sightings. It was reported that a Horned Grebe had been seen on Vista pond, a Peregrine Falcon was sighted and Cliff Swallows have appeared in Swoope. Also John reported Broad Winged Hawks and a Yellow Throated Warbler in Highland County.

Penny announced that she would lead a Field trip to Bells Lane (April 27<sup>th</sup> and May 1) to identify warblers and Jo will lead a field trip to McCormick's Mill (Wednesday April 15).

Darryl Schwalm announced events for Earth Day.

*Tuesday April 14 – Starry Nights at Frontier Culture Museum*

*Thursday April 16 – Program on bats –Frontier Culture Museum*

*Saturday April 18 – Exhibits at Sunspots Pavilion*

*Sunday April 19 – Kites and Critters Event*

*Thursday April 23 – Program on Owls by John Spahr – Montgomery Park*

Penny announced the Club Picnic will be May 16<sup>th</sup> at Natural Chimneys Park. Also the sign has been installed on Bells Lane along with new Blue



Bird houses (by Darryl). Also a Kestrel box has been installed along with 4 bat houses in various locations.

She announced the VSO annual meeting will be held May 8-10 at Wintergreen sponsored by our club and the Albemarle club.

Elaine Carwile announced that the Dismal Swamp Birding Festival will be held April 23-25 with field trip to Piney Grove to see the Cockaded Woodpecker on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Walt presented the list of nominated Officers: Penny Warren- President, Peter Nebel- Vice President, Lisa Hamilton- Treasurer, Grant Simmons – Secretary and Paul Callo – Newsletter Editor. The nominees were elected unanimously.

ohn Spahr then introduced Steve Rannels, his friend and a Naturalist and Photographer from Hershey PA. Steve showed vibrant pictures of birds, the people and wildlife as he shared information about their birding trip to Ethiopia where they identified over 540 species.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Grant Simmons, Secretary

### BIRD QUIZ!

The bird quiz will return in September!

**Last Month: Pygmy Batis  
(*Batis perkeo*)**



## TREASURER'S REPORT

3/01/2015 – 3/31/2015

as submitted by Lisa S. Hamilton

REGULAR OPERATING FUND		
BALANCE – 3/01/2015	\$ 5,321.96	
INCOME	\$ 71.06	
EXPENSES	\$ 137.72	
<b>BALANCE – 3/31/2015</b>		<b>\$ 5,255.30</b>
EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND		
BALANCE – 3/01/2015	\$ 20,440.40	
INCOME	\$ 70.00	
EXPENSES	\$ 2925.00	
<b>BALANCE - 3/31/2015</b>		<b>\$17,585.40</b>
<b>TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 3/31/2015</b>		<b>\$22,840.70</b>

### CORRECTION!

**Brenda Waters** is our new membership chair. Last month's newsletter erroneously identified Brenda Tekin as taking on this role.

Augusta Bird Club Website

[www.augustabirdclub.org](http://www.augustabirdclub.org)

