



# THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 51, No.4  
December 2016

*" The setting sun will always set me to rights -- or if a sparrow come before my window,  
I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel. "*

*~ Letter from Keats to Bailey, 1817*

## 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner

**Pannill Student Center,\*  
Mary Baldwin University  
December 12, 2016, 6:00 P.M.**

### Program schedule

- Social time with slide show by John Spahr
- Welcome and greeting
- ABC history, introduce Mayor Dull (as well as other guests and new members)
- Dinner
- Music by Andrew Clem
- Updates on Christmas Bird Counts, hawk watch, & field trips
- Review ABC initiatives
- Comments from members
- Door prizes

\* Located at the top of the big hill, across the street from the flagpole and President's House.

## Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 17th

The routes on this year's CBC have already been assigned, but last-minute volunteers are welcome to help out. Arrangements for holding a tally dinner are still in the works, so check your e-mail. Anyone who wants more information, please contact Allen Lerner at [birdergonewild@yahoo.com](mailto:birdergonewild@yahoo.com) or call 540-280-3423.

## FIELD TRIP

**Saturday, December 10th:** Lake Moomaw  
**Meeting Place & Time:** Big Lots parking lot on West Beverley Street in Staunton, 8:00 AM  
**Coordinator:** Andrew Clem ... [agclem@comcast.net](mailto:agclem@comcast.net)

We will be looking for eagles and other raptors, as well as mergansers, loons, or even cormorants. Unusual birds are often seen in this wilderness area, located in Bath County. Time permitting, we may stop at Augusta Springs or some other "hot spot" on the way back to Staunton. The field trip may be canceled in case of very cold or wet weather.



**Lake Moomaw, in Bath County, November 2009.**

## FALL 2016 FIELD NOTES

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This marks the final "Field Notes" from Dan Perkuchin, who is stepping down as head of our Records Committee. These reports are submitted to the American Birding Association, and are a very important*

*function of the Augusta Bird Club. Many thanks once again to Dan for the extraordinary work he has devoted to this endeavor for the last few years. Allen Larner is assuming primary responsibility for compiling field notes. What follows is a brief summary of the highlights in the report submitted by Dan.*

Augusta County Birds Records  
FieldNotes85 - Fall 2016

#### NEW RECORDS

Common Loon – 18 Sep 2016, Afton Mtn, Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch: New Early Fall Extreme Date.

Pied-Billed Grebe – (159) 28 Sep 2016, throughout Augusta County (ABC field trip): New Fall Peak Count.

Mississippi Kite – 19 Aug 2016, Staunton: First Non-Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch Fall Sighting. Also, New Highest RGHW Season Total (5).

Swainson's Hawk – 9 Oct 2016, Afton Mtn, Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch: Third Fall Record.

Merlin – 31 Aug - 15 Nov 2016, Afton Mtn, Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch: New Highest RGHW Season Total (51).

Sandhill Crane – (2) 1 Aug - 18 Nov 2016, Fishersville area (continuation of earlier reports and other locations): Second, Third, Fourth Fall Records.

Sanderling – 19 & 20 Sep 2016, Stuarts Draft: Sixth Fall Record.

Pileated Woodpecker – 24-26 Aug 2016, Southern Augusta Co.: First Documented Fall Breeding Record.

Loggerhead Shrike – 22 Oct 2016, Mt Solon: First Documented Fall Sighting Since Nov 2011.

White-Eyed Vireo – 5 Nov 2016, Staunton: New Late Fall Extreme Date.

Philadelphia Vireo – 14 Sep 2016, Steeles Tavern, McCormick Farm: New Peak Count (3).

Bicknell's Thrush – 3 Oct 2016, Fishersville, Augusta Health: First Augusta County Record.

Wood Thrush – (5) 10 Aug 2016, Swoope, Cattleman Rd: New Breeding Record.

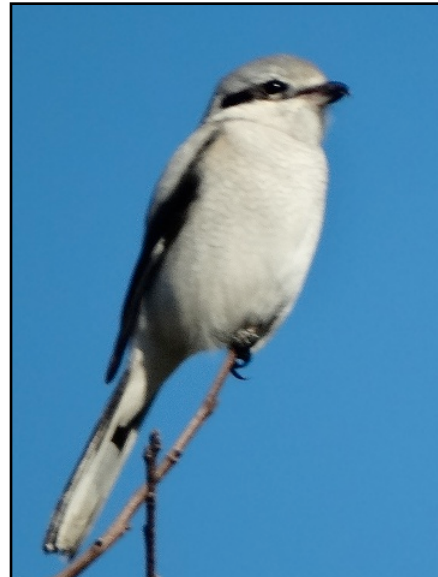
American Tree Sparrow – (2) 28 Sep 2016, Steeles Tavern, McCormick Farm: New Early Fall Extreme Date.

Summer Tanager – 12 Sep 2016 - 1 Oct 2016, Afton Mt, Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch and other locations: Fifth thru Eighth Fall Records.

Red Crossbill – 20 Oct 2016, Afton, Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch: Fourth Documented Fall Record.

#### OTHER BIRD SIGHTINGS OF NOTE

On November 12, Allen Larner and Elaine Carwile traveled up to Sully Woodlands, in Fairfax County, where they saw the Northern Shrike that has been reported there. It was a life bird for both of them, and a great find! This species ranges farther to the north than the Loggerhead Shrike, a rare bird in our area.



**Northern Shrike, in Fairfax County, November 12.  
Photo courtesy of Elaine Carwile.**

Several times since early November, Northern Harriers have been seen along Bell's Lane, as well as in parts of Augusta County. Sometimes they come swooping right at you, so watch out!



**Northern Harrier, near Verona, in early November.  
Photo courtesy of Ann Cline.**

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

On Wednesday, November 16, Jo King led a field trip to McCormick's Farm, along with five other members of the Augusta Bird Club. The weather was comfortable for a fall morning with no wind. Although our species count was slim with 28 species, we were rewarded with several unusual observations. Namely, 45-plus Eastern Meadowlarks were found in a tree, in the field, and at the edge of the pond, bathing and drinking along with a Wilson's Snipe in all his glory. Other highlights included a small flock of Cedar Waxwings, several American Goldfinches, various Woodpeckers, and a Red-tailed Hawk. After the field trip disbanded, Elaine Carwile and Liz Reed discovered a Barred Owl across the road from McCormick's. Some members later drove to nearby Willow Lake, where four Ruddy Ducks and one Ring-necked Duck were seen, along with 30 or more Canada Geese.



**Dan Perkuchin, Elaine Carwile, Mark Gatewood, Jo King, and Liz Reed, at McCormick Farm.**

On Saturday, November 19, Andrew Clem went on a "solo" field trip to Chimney Hollow. Among the highlights seen were: Golden-crowned Kinglets, both kinds of Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, and Brown Creeper. Over at nearby Braley Pond, there was a lone Pied-billed Grebe.

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## CHIRPS FROM THE CHIEF

I hope to see all of our members at our 50th Anniversary Celebration at 6 pm December 12 at Mary Baldwin University. Your board of directors has worked together to develop a fun event that will

include time to remember those who established this wonderful club, time to appreciate our current members, and time to look forward to a bright future for those who come after us.

One of the Augusta Bird Club's area of emphasis is conservation. In the current climate, it will be increasingly important for all of us to be both stewards of and advocates for conservation efforts in Virginia, across the United States and internationally. One way to do this is by donating to the Augusta Bird Club. The bird club uses our conservation and education fund to help insure that wild places stay wild and that future generations develop an understanding and appreciation for our wild places.

Speaking of donations, the ABC just received a \$1,000 donation to the YuLee R. Larner Nature Camp Scholarship from The Tracy & Sarah Wilkins Charitable Foundation. Sara Wilkins is YuLee's daughter. We greatly appreciate this generous donation.

Please accept my warm wishes to you and your loved ones during this holiday season.

Peter Van Acker  
President

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



### Talk on the plight of Kestrels

American Kestrels are disappearing at an alarming rate. Today's range-wide population is only half of what existed in the 1960s and in some states the species is even listed as State endangered. Perhaps most concerning, no one knows why populations are in such decline despite it being one of the best studied raptors in North America. Come out to the Ivy Creek Foundation Education Center on Thursday, December 15 at 7 pm for a presentation outlining what we do and do not know about the

American Kestrel decline. Dr. Sarah Schulwitz, Assistant Director of the American Kestrel Partnership, will discuss several research recommendations for moving forward for the conservation of this charismatic but declining falcon. Learn more and get involved with the American Kestrel Partnership at [kestrel.peregrinefund.org](http://kestrel.peregrinefund.org).

(Submitted by Dan Bieker, Monticello Bird Club.)



**Ruby-crowned Kinglet, with an aphid in its beak.  
Staunton, November 4.**

### **AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB MINUTES**

November 14, 2016, 7:00 P.M.  
Meeting at Covenant Presbyterian Church

Vice President Stan Heatwole called the meeting to order in the absence of President Van Acker. He introduced visitors Steve & Emma Talley and invited them to become members. Lisa Hamilton reported that profits on the seed sale are approximately \$2500. Grant stated that he has a variety of extra seeds if anyone needs more.

Gabriel Mapel reported on his learning experiences at the Audubon camp on Hog Island. He thanked the club for helping to sponsor him and stated that he is volunteering in the National Park system in hopes of securing a position with the service. He was excited to add the Leach's Storm Petrel to his life list and participated in learning Photography and Bird Banding.

Allen Larner announced that the Augusta Christmas Bird Count will be Saturday December 17. He asked for volunteers to contact him noting there will be no count dinner.

Stan reminded members that our 50th Anniversary celebration and dinner will be held at Mary Baldwin University on December 12th. Reservations need to be received by November 30th. It was also announced that the Birds and Brews group will meet on the last Tuesday of this month at Yelping Dog at 6:00 PM.

Professor Dick Rowe provided a most informative program on wintering waterfowl with pictures and tales centering on Willow Lake in Rockbridge County.

Submitted by Grant Simmons, secretary

### **SURPLUS BIRD SEED AVAILABLE!**

Once again, we have extra bird seed from our annual seed sale this fall. Here is what is available:

Augusta Mix 20# & 40# bags, Safflower 20# bags, Sunflower Hearts 20# and 5# bags, Suet cakes and Squirrel Buster feeders. See Grant Simmons, 337-0471, 448-5393.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

submitted by Lisa Hamilton  
10/01/2016 – 10/31/2016

<b>OPERATING FUND</b>		
BALANCE - 10/01/2016	\$ 6,832.67	
INCOME	\$ 445.93	
EXPENSES	\$ 43.48	
<b>BALANCE - 10/31/2016</b>		<b>\$ 7,235.12</b>
<b>EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND</b>		
BALANCE - 10/01/2016	\$13,695.32	
INCOME	\$12,970.83	
EXPENSES	\$ 9,594.72	
<b>BALANCE - 10/31/2016</b>		<b>\$17,071.43</b>
<b>TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 10/31/2016</b>		<b>\$24,306.55</b>

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

Members of the Augusta Bird Club are invited to submit photographs, reports of field trips, or any special birding observations they have made recently. Just send an e-mail message to the editor of the ABC Bulletin, Andrew Clem, at:

[agclem@comcast.net](mailto:agclem@comcast.net)

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## CHANGE OF ADDRESS, ETC.?

Members of the Augusta Bird Club who have recently moved or who have a new telephone number or e-mail address should notify Brenda Walters, the Membership chairperson, at:

[brendahwalters@comcast.net](mailto:brendahwalters@comcast.net)

Thank you!

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## HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



## BIRD QUIZ!

Can you identify this bird?  
(Submitted by Elaine Carwile.)



The answer will be revealed next month.  
Happy guessing!

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(No quiz last month.)

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Virginia Society of Ornithology  
[www.viriniabirds.net](http://www.viriniabirds.net)

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