



THE AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 55, No.5
January 2021

*" Remember me, love, when I'm reborn
as the shrike to your sharp and glorious thorn. "*

~ "Shrike" (2019) by Andrew Hozier-Byrne

VIRTUAL JANUARY MEETING

Date: Monday, January 11th, 7:00 PM

Place: Online via Zoom (see link below)

Program: Migratory bird banding

Speaker: Ashli Gorbet, Black Swamp Bird
Observatory

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86541965987?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86541965987?pwd=SzFnNXFFLzNVMMmJzSWxkYUW5xTE4zZz09)
[pwd=SzFnNXFFLzNVMMmJzSWxkYUW5xTE4zZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86541965987?pwd=SzFnNXFFLzNVMMmJzSWxkYUW5xTE4zZz09)

Meeting ID: 865 4196 5987 Passcode: 002500

Ashli Gorbet, Banding Projects Manager at the Black Swamp Bird Observatory (associated with nearby Magee Marsh in Ohio), grew up on the west side of Cleveland with a deep love for the outdoors and a passion for conservation. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Management from The Ohio State University and is currently finishing up a Master of Natural Resources at Utah State University. After working on Sonoran pronghorn recovery efforts in southwestern Arizona and studying birds in Central Ohio, Ashli moved to Albuquerque and spent over a decade exploring New Mexico. There she participated in research on Barn Owls, Burrowing Owls, Varied Buntings, and Black-throated Gray Warblers, among others. She spent nine years working at a federal facility helping to evaluate hundreds of projects

for potential biological concerns, performing surveys to ensure compliance with federal law. She also spent six years serving on the board of the New Mexico Ornithological Society and has over a decade of banding experience. Ashli's biggest passions in life are conservation, research, and education.

FIELD TRIPS

Friday, January 8th

AND

Tuesday, January 26th: Bell's Lane

Meeting place and time: Bird club kiosk, 8:30 a.m.

Coordinator: Penny Warren,
onthewingnow17@gmail.com, 540.849.9245

We will start the new year with two January 'Birding on Bell's' walks. Let's see what the month of January will have in store on Bell's. Maybe a snow storm will bring in some unusual birds and waterfowl!

Saturday, January 23rd: Braley Pond

Meeting place and time: Picnic area parking lot,*
9:00 AM

Coordinator: Andrew Clem ... agclem@comcast.net
or 540-849-8234

From Staunton take Rt. 250 west about 15 miles, turn RIGHT on Rt. 715, go about a half mile, and turn LEFT onto the road that leads to the parking area. We will take a short hike around the pond, and perhaps venture further upstream depending on what we see and hear. This wooded area is known for a variety of birds throughout the year; Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Fox Sparrows, and Golden-crowned Kinglets have been seen there in the past. Rain date: January 30.

NOTE: Field trips are subject to social distancing! The annual winter trip to Highland County will not be held this year due to the coronavirus. Check our website (www.augustabirdclub.org) for updates on field trips that have been cancelled or postponed.



**Loggerhead Shrike in Swoope, December 8.
Photo courtesy of Vic Laubach.**

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Happy New Year to all! I know we are all hoping that things will gradually return to normal as we get vaccinated and the weather improves, giving people a little more space to stay at a safe distance. Meanwhile, we make the best of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. So for me, that means a lot of staying inside and enjoying the birds that come to my feeders. On that note, I'd like to share with you some interesting (cute?) behavior I observed recently.

There is a Carolina Wren that likes to frequent one of my feeders with a mix of seeds, nuts, and some dried fruit. This wren is very picky, and searches until it can find an intact peanut. With its prize clamped in its beak, it flies to our deck and onto a rubber doormat made with row upon row of hexagonal cells, kind of funnel shaped, about an inch wide at the top tapering to three quarters of an inch at the bottom. I have watched this wren, on more than one occasion, take its peanut and stow it in one of the cells. Once stashed away, the wren went off to take care of other important wren

business, with its peanut stored for future use. Sure enough, a bit later it returned, and using the cell to contain the bits, broke the nut into smaller pieces which were contained in the small space, like dinner on a plate! Has anyone else observed this behavior? If you have let me know. Isn't amazing how our backyard feeders can entertain and enlighten us day after day?

Don't forget to catch our Zoom meeting with Ashli Gorbet from the Black Swamp Bird Observatory on Lake Erie in Ohio. Look for the link elsewhere in this newsletter. I hope to see you then on the small screen. Until next time,

**Jack Holt
President, Augusta Bird Club**



**Bufflehead (male) on the Chesapeake Bay near
Reedville, December 13. Photo courtesy of Ann Cline.**

FIELD NOTES

FieldNotes101 — August–November 2020

The following are abridged highlights of fall records, peak counts, early or late dates, from August through November 2020. The full reports will be incorporated into the book *Birds of Augusta County*. (RGHW = Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch.)

Canvasback (1) – Oct. 30 2020, Bells Lane: matches early date

Ring-necked Duck (147) – Nov. 12, 2020, throughout Augusta County: new peak count

Surf Scoter (3) – Oct. 26 2020, Stuarts Draft: sixth fall record

Black Scoter (5) – Oct 26, 2020, Mint Spring Area:
second fall record

Glossy Ibis (1) – Sept. 11, 2020, RGHW: fourth fall
record

Osprey (1) – Nov. 29, 2020, RGHW: new late date

Swallow-tailed Kite (3) – Nov. 1, 2020, Morris Mill Rd:
second fall record & fall peak count

Broad-winged Hawk (1) – Nov. 14, 2020, RGHW: new
late date

Swainson's Hawk (1) – Aug. 19, 2020, RGHW: seventh fall
record & new early date

American Golden Plover (1) – Nov. 14, 2020, Guthrie Rd.:
new late date

White-rumped Sandpiper (1) – Aug. 5, 2020, Quillen's
Pond: new early date

Stilt Sandpiper (10) – Aug. 16, 2020, Quillen's Pond
Lyndhurst: new fall peak count

Short-eared Owl (3) – Nov. 6, 2020, Bells Lane: new early
date

Northern Saw-Whet Owl (1) – Nov. 26, 2020,
Shenandoah National Park: fourth fall record

Calliope Hummingbird (1) Oct. 23 – Nov. 30, 2020,
Waynesboro, Doods area: first county record

Rufous Hummingbird (1) – Nov. 17 - 30, 2020, Morris Mill
Rd.: fifth county record

Selasphorus Hummingbird (Allen's or Rufous) (1) – Oct.
11 - 12, 2020, Stuarts Draft: sixth county Record

Merlin (1) – Aug. 14, 2020, RGHW: new early date

Olive-sided Flycatcher (1) – Aug. 17, 2020, Blue Ridge
Parkway: new early date

Acadian Flycatcher (1) – Sept. 22, 2020, RGHW: new late
date

Willow Flycatcher (1) – Sept. 16, 2020, Blue Ridge
Parkway: new late date

Least Flycatcher (1) – Oct. 4, 2020, Quillen's Pond: new
late date

Yellow-throated Vireo (1) – Oct. 18, 2020, Staunton: new
late date

Blue Jay (1,968) – Sept. 24, 2020, throughout Augusta
County: new peak count

Bank Swallow (3) – Oct. 8, 2020, RGHW: new late date

Barn Swallow (5) – Aug. 12 - 29, 2020, Staunton: adult
with 4 in nest that fledged: new late breeding record

House Wren (1) – Oct. 30, 2020, Swoope Area: new late
date

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1) – Nov. 28, 2020, Swoope area:
new late date

Blue-winged Warbler (1) – Sept. 24, 2020, Quillen's Pond:
new late date

Worm-eating Warbler (1) – Sept. 26, 2020, Weyers Cave
area: new late date

Bobolink (2) – Oct. 11, 2020, Fishersville area: matches
late date

Common Grackle (25,583) – Nov. 13, 2020, RGHW: new
peak count

**Allen Lerner
Records Chair
Augusta Bird Club**



**Rufous Hummingbird on Morris Mill Rd. north of
Swoope, December 22.**

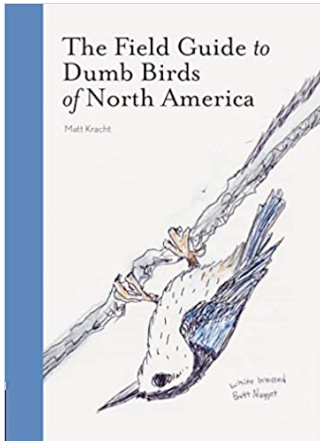
NOTE: Reports on the Augusta County (Dec. 27)
and Waynesboro (Jan. 3) Christmas Bird Counts will
be published in the February issue.

NATURALIST BOOK NOOK

The Field Guide to Dumb Birds of North America,
by Matt Kracht

Matt had a fourth grade teacher, an amateur
ornithologist, who subjected the students to an
overdose of bird related information and events. A
Christmas assignment to write a report on a bird he

could never find traumatized Matt, and he never quite recovered!



This book is a funny, snarky, spoof of a field guide. It is a tad juvenile and contains some profane sailor language (reader beware) and not necessarily a book to read from cover to cover. Included in the beginning of the book, with some humor thrown in, are several pages on how to identify a bird, bird behavior, songs and calls and ethical guidelines.

Matt moves on with his illustrations of 50 birds and mocks them by renaming each bird, e.g. Western Meadowjerk, Kentucky Gargler, Wood Snork ... examples of the milder nicknames. He also offers his humorous insights of their behavior. The book ends with tips on birdwatching, types of feeders and suggestions as to how and why to keep a bird journal.

If some of your friends don't get your bird nerd tendencies and poke fun at you, this might be the book just for them. When we birders need a laugh, you can read one or two of Matt's descriptions and chuckle along with him. It's silly fun, and who doesn't need a good chuckle, especially now!?!?

by Penny Warren



Common Loons (adult on top, juvenile below) on the pond behind Hardee's in Verona, December 30.

AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB MINUTES

Monthly meeting via Zoom (online)
December 14, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by President Jack Holt.

Recent Sightings: Red-breasted Nuthatches, Evening Grosbeaks in Rockingham County. A concern was raised about birders reporting specific locations when sighting sensitive species such as the recent Loggerhead Shrike in Augusta County. The worry is that birders may not be ethical in their respect for both property owners and the sensitivity of the bird. It was noted that reports to ebird would be available to others. More discussion is needed.

Christmas Bird Counts: The Augusta County count will be 12/27/2020 with Allen Lerner coordinating. The Waynesboro count will be 1/3/21 with Crista Cabe coordinating.

Bird Seed Sale: The sale went very smoothly and brought over \$5,000 in net proceeds, a new record. One possible reason for increased orders may be that Rockingham and Charlottesville bird clubs did not hold seed sales this year.

Upcoming Field Trip: 12/21 at Bell's Lane with Penny Warren leading.

Grant Simmons Nature Camp Scholarship: Grant has been notified of the new NC scholarship in his name and he sent a thank you note along with a \$250 donation towards it. He is doing well in Florida.

Harry Lumadue: The club sent a donation to the Verona Food Pantry in memory of Harry Lumadue.

Program: Carla Dove presented a program, "When Birds Collide." Carla is a forensic ornithologist with the Smithsonian's Natural History Museum Feather Identification Lab in DC. She reported that approximately 11,000 bird collisions with civilian and military planes cause millions of dollars in damages every year. The lab's challenging job is to identify the bird species involved, which they usually are able to do within 1-8 days. New technology with electron microscopes and DNA analysis helps them identify even tiny remains. The lab is closed to visitors now but in the future Carla invited ABC members to visit the lab.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm

Submitted by Marilyn Nash, Secretary



Snowy Owl, seen at a farm west of Mount Crawford, January 2. It is the same general area where this species has been seen in recent years.

TREASURER'S REPORT

submitted by Lisa Hamilton
11/01/2020 – 11/30/2020

OPERATING FUND		
BALANCE - 11/01/2020	\$ 8,160.82	
INCOME	\$ 1.42	
EXPENSES	\$ 359.90	
BALANCE -11/30/2020		\$ 7,802.34
EDUCATION/CONSERVATION FUND		
BALANCE - 11/01/2020	\$17,324.68	
INCOME	\$25,033.51	
EXPENSES	\$16,639.96	
BALANCE - 11/30/2020		\$25,718.23
TOTAL BALANCE ALL FUNDS - 11/30/2020	\$33,520.57	

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mary Alice Bomar
Martha Kennor Bowen
Sharon Carderelli
David Cooper
Patricia Dewitt
Sara Nair James
Diane Lepkowski
Lee and Lev Norford
Robin Puffenbarger
Nancy Sorrels
Tamra Willis
Martina Tolliver
Ramona Bearor
Sara Foster

BIRD QUIZ!

Can you identify this bird?
(Photo taken by Hugh Chittenden.)



The answer will be revealed in next month's issue.

~
Last month: Barred Eagle-owl.
We have a winner! Nancy Lawler

Augusta Bird Club Bulletin
Editor: Andrew Clem, agclem@comcast.net

www.augustabirdclub.org

Virginia Society of Ornithology
www.virginiabirds.net