



AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Vol. 57, No.5
January 2023

*"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

JANUARY MEETING

Date: Monday, January 9th, 7:00 PM

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

Program: Wildlife Center of Virginia: the 40th
Anniversary and Future Plans

Speaker: Ed Clark

Pre-meeting dinner: At Little Maria's in Verona
(arrive by 5:15 PM). If interested, please contact
Vic Laubach (laubach@virginia.edu) before
noon that day.

For the last 40 years, Ed Clark has been President and co-founder of the Wildlife Center of Virginia (WCV), the world's leading teaching and research hospital for wildlife and conservation medicine. Since 1982, the Center has used the clinical care of more than 90,000 patients as the basis for environmental health studies and environmental education messages that reach hundreds of thousands of people each year. The Center trains veterinary and conservation students and professionals from more than 40 countries, and plays an active role in conservation policy issues nationwide. Throughout his 45-year-long career in conservation, Ed Clark has served in leadership roles with many national and international conservation organizations, including the Alaska Coalition, the American Bird Conservancy, the National Wildlife Federation, the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, and the Philippe Cousteau Foundation. He has also served on several federal and state agency boards and advisory committees, including the Federal Invasive

Species Advisory Committee, the Virginia Council on the Environment, and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. He is a well-known television personality having hosted several series including Wildlife Emergency on Animal Planet, Virginia Outdoors on Virginia Public Television, and the Emmy-award nominated series UNTAMED, which currently airs on PBS affiliates nationwide. He has won numerous local, regional, and national awards for his work.



Ed lives in the Shenandoah Valley, where he shares his active life with his wife, Dr. Kim West Clark, and their four dogs and three horses. He will talk to us about the 40th Anniversary of the Wildlife Center including plans for a dramatic expansion of the facility; tripling the size of the current hospital and significantly growing their programs.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, January 7th: Highland & Bath Counties

Meeting place & time: At the Food Lion lower parking lot on N. Coalter St. in Staunton at 7:30 AM.

Coordinator: Allen Lerner,
larnersky@mindspring.com

We will carpool for the all-day trip. Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, who knows? Anything is possible! Any type of bad weather will cancel: rain in 30 degrees or less, snow, or ice. Bring snacks and dress for the weather that day.

Saturday, January 28th: Boy Scout camp trail / road and Swoope

Meeting place & time: At the Food Lion lower parking lot on N. Coalter St. in Staunton at 9:00 AM.

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

We will go hiking along this woodland trail for about a half mile in each direction, and then check out the usual spots in Swoope. Rain, snow, or temperatures below 30 degrees will cancel. Dress for the weather.

NOTE: Check our website for updates on field trips that have been added, cancelled, or postponed:

www.augustabirdclub.org/Field_trips.php



ENCORE! MacGillivray's Warbler at Lake Shenandoah, December 13. This rare bird was sighted there through late December.
Photo courtesy of Jim Hill.



Barred Owl in North Myrtle Beach, SC, mid-December.
Photo courtesy of Stephen Pietrowsky.



Eurasian Wigeon at McCormick's Mill, December 23.
First one ever in Augusta County?
Photo courtesy of Vic Laubach.



Loggerhead Shrike in Swoope, December 31.
Photo courtesy of Lynne Parks.



This Red-headed Woodpecker seems to be in a transitional molt between juvenile and adult plumage. (near the Boy Scout Lake in Swoope, January 2)

IT'S PAST TIME TO RENEW YOUR AUGUSTA BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP!

ABC is a vital part of the local bird community and your support is essential. ABC thanks all those who have already renewed their membership and we encourage those who have not yet renewed to do so today. Memberships expired December 31, and if you would like to continue receiving the newsletter and be notified about the clubs future projects, monthly programs, etc., please visit the Membership page and renew today! If you have any questions, please call Mona Bearor at 540-466-5123.

www.augustabirdclub.org/Membership.html

FIELD NOTES

FieldNotes109 — August–November 2023

The following are abridged highlights of fall records, peak counts, early or late dates, from August through November 2022. The full reports will be incorporated into the book *Birds of Augusta County*.

NOTE: The previous Field Notes edition (#108, Summer 2022) was published in the October issue.

Swallow-tailed Kite (1) – Aug. 7, 2022, Stuarts Draft area: 4th fall record

Rufous Hummingbird (1 female) – Oct. 15 thru Nov. 30, 2022, Middlebrook area: 6th fall record / rare fall visitor

Cerulean Warbler (1) – Sept. 17, 2022, Augusta Springs Wetlands: new late date

Northern Waterthrush (1) – Oct. 26, 2022, Stuarts Draft area: new late date

Wilson's Warbler (1) – Oct. 17, 2022, Bell's Lane, Staunton: new late date

Nelson's Sparrow (1) – Oct. 19, 2022, Augusta Springs area: 3rd fall record

**Allen Larner
Records Chair
Augusta Bird Club**

**PREVIEW:
BIRDS OF ARGENTINA!**

Club member Tom Roberts is currently traveling in South America, and when he returns this spring he plans to write an article about his birding adventures in the Southern Hemisphere. In the mean time, here is just a sample:



Southern Lapwing, in El Calafate, Argentina, (November?) Photo courtesy of Tom Roberts.

HOLIDAY PARTY 2022: TOGETHER AGAIN!

On Monday, December 12, the Augusta Bird Club held its annual Holiday Party for the first time since 2019, before the covid-19 pandemic. For the time being, at least, normality has returned! As usual, Linda Matkins was in charge of the festivities, handing out bird books and other fabulous prizes to the lucky attendees. Club President Rich Wood put together a visual display consisting of special bird photographs taken by club members over the past few years. The pot luck dinner provided great nourishment to all.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER: JANUARY, 2023

January can bring some harsh weather (cold temps and snow), so many of us turn to our backyard bird feeders for our birding enjoyment. Backyard bird feeding is big business in the U.S.! According to several sources, about 57 million Americans feed wild birds around their homes. They spend approximately \$4 billion on bird seed each year, and since bird seed weighs very little, that's a lot of bird seed! This doesn't include the millions of pounds of suet. But why do we do this? The answer is simple. For the pure JOY of it! And in these recent years of being stuck at home with the pandemic, it has allowed us a direct connection to our natural world. If engaging with our local bird life brings more awareness and appreciation to our environment, that's always a good thing!

However, to be honest, backyard bird feeding can bring negative physical consequences as well as ethical considerations. The Big Three are: Disease, Predation, and Collision. Drawing birds into close contact on shared surfaces makes it easy for them to spread bacteria like salmonella and E. coli. Luring them to the same place on a predictable schedule makes them more vulnerable to predators, like cats and hawks. Some birds may accidentally smash into glass windows near feeders, though windows in tall buildings still cause far more collision hazards. Then there's the ethical aspect of our activities, which is continuing the bad trend of feeding wild animals. That's because teaching wild animals to associate humans with handouts can lead to problems (i.e. "bad" bears at campsites; alligators stalking people). So, should I just stop feeding altogether? No, not necessarily. Don't despair. It's not all "doom and gloom."

Studies have shown that bird feeding can aid survival during migration and harsh winters. And some bird lovers reason that feeding birds may help balance the harm we've done them by turning woods and meadows into lawns and shopping malls. There are many things we can do to help "offset" the potential pitfalls of bird feeding — like feeding only seasonally (not during breeding seasons), cleaning bird feeders regularly, moving feeders further than 30 feet away from reflective windows, or moving them very close (within 3 feet) to avoid window strikes. Moreover, we can always plant more native plants that provide seeds, nectar, and berries favored by local and migrant bird species. As to the benefits for us humans, consider the view of Paul Baicich, co-author of *Feeding Wild Birds in America: Culture, Commerce and Conservation* (2015). "There's nothing wrong with bird-feeding," Baicich

writes. "It's wonderful. It introduces people to nature — in their backyard. It's the intermediate step between sitting around the house and actually going out to a national wildlife refuge." He adds: "The birds don't *need* the feeders. We do."

Happy New Year, stay warm, and good birding!

**Rich Wood,
President, Augusta Bird Club**

TREASURER'S REPORT

submitted by Mona Bearor
12/01/2022 – 12/31/2022

Operating Fund	
Balance December 1, 2022	\$9,979.47
Income	\$481.50
Expenses	\$380.27
Balance December 30, 2022	\$10,080.70
Conservation/Education Fund	
Balance December 1, 2022	\$23,124.40
Income	\$1,332.00
Expenses	\$0.00
Balance December 30, 2022	\$24,456.40
Closing Balance all funds	\$34,537.10

HELP WANTED

Editor, Augusta Bird Club Bulletin.
Will train. Desired qualifications: layout design,
editing for grammar, etc., and an eye for detail.
Duties begin in the fall. Interested persons should
contact the club president, Rich Wood, at:

beagleboy831@comcast.net

BIRD QUIZ!

Can you identify this bird?

(Photo taken in Lima, Peru, Feb. 26, 2017.)



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

~

Last month: NONE

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Editor: Andrew Clem, agclem@comcast.net
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Club website:
www.augustabirdclub.org

Virginia Society of Ornithology
www.viriniabirds.net