



THE SISKIN

Newsletter of the Northern Virginia Bird Club

Vol. 58, No. 3

August 2013

www.nvabc.org

Saturday, August 17

X-trip to Bombay Hook

See fall calendar of NVBC trips and events inside

FOURTH ANNUAL

Cape May Weekend

In the fall of 2013 we are going back! From October 18 to 20, we will be hanging out at the world famous Cape May Hawk Watch, and visiting other local hotspots such as the Meadows and the Cape May Bird Observatory. We will start at 3 PM on Friday and finish up Sunday afternoon with a semi-pelagic on the Cape May Ferry. Space is limited to 20 people. NVBC membership and registration are required. Our hotel, a.k.a. headquarters for the weekend, will be the Sea Crest Inn. This hotel does not serve breakfast, but many of the rooms have a full kitchen. The hotel is located within walking distance of the beach pavilion that is our typical Saturday morning destination.

SEA CREST INN

101 Beach Avenue
Cape May, NJ 08204

Phone: 609-884-4561 or
Toll Free 866-733-1405

Email: seacrestinncapeamay@hotmail.com

Website: www.seacrestinn.com

To make a reservation, please call the Sea Crest Inn and provide your name and phone number. You will be asked to mail a personal check or money order within 7 days of calling. On the check enter the dates you will be staying and NVBC. You will be mailed a confirmation number.

Please drop me an email at drgerco@hotmail.com if you would like to participate.

—*Gerco Hoogeweg*

NVBC GENERAL MEETING—WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 8 PM

State of the Birds

Speaker

Greg Butcher

Most of our members have participated in at least one Christmas Bird Count. Have you ever wondered what happens to our carefully gathered information and what use is made of it? You will have a chance to find out at the coming September meeting. Our speaker will be Greg Butcher, the Coordinator of Wings Across the Americas for the US Forest Service. His topic, “State of the Birds,” is based on his extensive work with Christmas count data. Greg is a long time birdwatcher and received his PhD in Zoology from the University of Washington in Seattle. He has been the Director of Bird Population Studies at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology where he began his study of CBC data. He has also been a director of the American Birding Association, editor of *Birder's World* magazine (now called *BirdWatching*), midwest regional coordinator for Partners in Flight, and Director of Bird Conservation for the National Audubon Society.

Early bird refreshments start at 7:30 PM. Any contributions of food or beverage will be most gratefully received. There will be a drawing for door prizes. Northern Virginia Bird Club pins will be available for members who would like to buy them (\$5 each).

MEETING PLACE: Church of the Covenant, 2666 Military Road, Arlington, 22207. Directions are on page 5.

Scarlet Tanager in May at Monticello Park, Alexandria
Photograph by Larry Meade



Presidential Peentings

Why do we love birding? We all have our reasons. Some of us like the challenge of finding new birds for our life lists or our year lists. Sometimes this requires going to extremes to feed our obsession. Why else would anyone go to a dump in January or the middle of the ocean in February or the Arizona desert in July? I have heard this style of birding referred to as a cross between hunting and stamp collecting. Birding also gives us a reason to visit areas of the world that we might not otherwise ever see. When you travel for birding, it often opens the door for all kinds of other adventures. Some people take a more mellow approach and bird simply to spend some time in the outdoors or to enjoy the fellowship of others who share a similar interest. Regardless of why you bird or what your experience level might be, the NVBC has many opportunities for you to get outside and enjoy our avian friends. We have many local trips as well as some trips to more far-flung destinations such as Bombay Hook, Delaware, and Cape May, New Jersey. Let's go birding!

—Larry Meade



Cape May Warbler photographed in May by Larry Meade at Monticello Park, Alexandria

SPRING WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS



Snowy Egret making a splash at Chincoteague. Photo by Bill Millhouser

CHINCOTEAGUE

Twenty-five members of the Northern Virginia Bird Club ventured to Chincoteague this past spring. The trip was led by Elton Morel and Larry Meade. Elton deserves special thanks for organizing the trip and keeping it running smoothly. As a group, we tallied a total of 118 species for the weekend.

We started our trip Friday afternoon a little after 3 PM at the Wildlife Loop where there were a good number of shorebirds to study. We watched a young Bald Eagle on its nest exercising its wings probably preparing to fledge. We then watched an aerial dual between an adult Bald Eagle and a young Herring Gull. It looked like the eagle was trying to grab the gull as they tussled for almost a full minute. The gull was too agile and the Bald Eagle tired itself out and gave up. Another highlight was a resplendent male Blue Grosbeak who hopped

around in the bushes near the road. Later on Beach Road, we found a couple of Black-crowned Night-Herons.

Later that evening we gathered at the Wildlife Loop parking lot at 8 PM in hopes of hearing and maybe even seeing Chuck-wills-widows. We were rewarded by hearing several birds calling and by witnessing two of them flying across the road into the woods. One bird even briefly perched on a small snag for our viewing enjoyment. There was still enough light to see some color on the bird which was larger than we thought it would be.

On Saturday we headed over to the Woodland Trail (AKA mosquito-palooza). Here we found a Red-headed Woodpecker, a female Blackpoll Warbler, many Brown-headed Nuthatches and Pine Warblers, a flyover Common Loon, and a brief glimpse of a Magnolia Warbler.

Later we took the bus tour to the Washflats. Here we found many shorebirds and some Gull-billed Terns. Several Wild Turkeys were strolling down the road including a humongous tom turkey. We also found some Red Knots, Whimbrels and a Field Sparrow. Down near the beach we found several Piping Plovers, Marbled Godwits, and a variety of terns including Caspian and Royal. A flock of Brown Pelicans flew by and a Northern Gannet was noted in the distance over the ocean. A late Yellow-rumped Warbler was also hanging around.

On Sunday, a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was found in the town of Chincoteague along with a Red-throated Loon near the bridge to the causeway. At the boat launch on Queen Sound Flats we saw a breeding plumage Horned Grebe who dove before I could photograph him. We were also surprised to find three Brant and a few more Gull-billed Terns. Com-

continued on p. 7

MIGRATION HOTSPOT TRIPS

Last summer we read *Songbird Journeys, Four Seasons in the Lives of Migratory Birds* by Miyoko Chu. She is an ornithologist and staff writer at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. In her own words: “This book follows songbirds through the four seasons as they migrate, mate, raise young, and winter in places thousands of miles away. It is a story of the journeys of birds as well as the scientific breakthroughs that ornithologists have made in understanding the migrations that pass invisibly overhead.” The book is fascinating and includes an appendix listing songbird migration hotspots. It inspired us to visit several hotspots in Ontario, Texas and Ohio.

So in September 2012 we drove to Point Pelee National Park and Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) in Ontario to observe fall songbird migrants. The highlight was our visit to Long Point Bird Observatory in Port Rowan. We were fortunate to be able to listen while the LPBO program manager, Stuart Mackenzie, was giving a presentation about their program to Canadian Ministry of Natural Resources staff. The LPBO was founded in 1960 as a research and monitoring station tracking local breeding and migratory birds. Their database enables trend analysis of increases and decreases of bird species over the years. Staff and volunteers capture, band and release birds and conduct a daily bird census. We accompanied the trained volunteers who removed the birds from mist nets and placed them in cloth bags for banding. We had incredible looks of netted migrants and migrants being banded.

This spring we drove to Texas in April and to Ohio in May to view spring migrants. We saw a total of 206 species during both spring trips: (148 in Texas and 111 in Ohio) with a combined total of 33 warblers (18 in Texas and 29 in Ohio). We monitored the weather because shifting winds and weather fronts could bring down the birds in certain migrant traps. However our travel dates were set; we were not chasing fall out alerts. Our goal was to enjoy seeing the birds in these wildlife areas and hopefully see a few new birds.

Our first Texas stop was Winnie, where we visited the High Island bird sanctuaries and Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge along the coast. The highlight was High Island. The Houston Audubon Society manages the High Island sanctuaries. During the spring migration Tropical Birding provides guided walks around Boy Scout Woods-Louis B. Smith Bird Sanctuary, the Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary, and a shorebird field trip so it isn't necessary to visit High Island as part of a birding tour. We saw grosbeaks and warblers at the



Bewick's Wren, photographed in Friedrich Wilderness Park in Texas by Pat Gause

water feature at the Boy Scouts Woods. Seeing the nesting waterbirds at The Rookery at Smith Oaks was fantastic. We also saw a Ruff at the Anahuac NWR Skillern Tract.

During our visit to the Rio Grande Valley we stayed at the Country Inn and Suites in Harlingen and drove to the South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center, the South Padre Island Convention Center, the Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, Estero-Llano Grande State Park, Hugh Ramsey Nature Park, and the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. The Nature Center boardwalk allowed us to closely view Black-necked Stilts, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, an American Bittern, and Soras. Warblers, tanagers and other birds flew into the shrubs by the

American Redstart at Long Point Bird Observatory. Photo by Neal Gause



Nature Center. The water feature and feeding stations around the Convention Center drew many birds and more birders. On the drive back from Harlingen, we stopped in San Antonio to visit the Friedrich Wilderness Park, where we were able to photograph a life bird, the Bewick's Wren, and to see but not photograph the Golden-cheeked warbler.

During the Texas trip we had very good looks at 18 warbler species such as the Kentucky, Worm-eating, Yellow-throated and Golden-cheeked and other species such as Swainson's Thrush, Western Tanager, Painted Buntings, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Hooded Oriole, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and Black-chinned Hummingbirds.

We were in Oregon, Ohio, May 11–17 focusing on the Magee Marsh boardwalk and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. Migrants are passing through Magee Marsh from the middle of April to the end of May. There is a birding festival held in early May called “The Biggest Week in American Birding,” which was held this year May 3–12. We arrived for the last couple of days of the festival. Tropical Birding guides were assisting in locating and identifying migrants along the Magee Marsh boardwalk during and for several days after the festival. One advantage of attending the festival is the opportunity to take festival field trips to other productive birding sites in the Lake Erie area. The Biggest Week website is:

Continued on p. 6

UPCOMING TRIPS AND EVENTS

Compiled by Elton Morel

Note:

- Beginning birders are welcome on all trips.
- To make reservations when they are indicated, please call one of the trip leaders. Phone numbers are on p. 6.
- If in doubt about a trip because of weather, call one of the leaders.
- Check the NVBC website for any updated information about trips: <http://www.nvabc.org/trips.htm>. To receive email notices, add your name to the NVBC eMail Exchange; for sign-up directions, see the back page of the newsletter.

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>August</u> | | | | | | 17 Bombay Hook X-Trip <i>Members only/ Registration required</i> Larry Meade |
| | | | | | | 24 7 AM Huntley Meadows Larry Cartwright |
| 25 7 PM Swift/Nighthawk Watch Joanna Taylor <i>Call leader for meeting place and directions</i> | | | | 29 8:30 AM Fort C F Smith Elizabeth Fenton Joanna Taylor | | 31 8 AM Riverbend— Nature Center Larry Meade |
| <u>September</u> | | | | | | |
| 1 8 AM Dyke Marsh Friends of Dyke Marsh | | 4 8:30 AM Long Branch Charlotte Friend Jean Tatalias | | | | 7 8 AM Lake Fairfax Park Elton Morel |
| | | 11 8:30 AM Jones Point Park Dave Boltz | | 13–15 VSO Chincoteague Weekend | | 14 7:30 AM Leesylvania SP Steve Bruck Frances Raskin |
| | | 18 8:30 AM Daniels Run Catherine Kubo Carolyn Williams 8 PM NVBC Meeting Church of the Cove- nant, Arlington | | | | 21 7:30 AM Occoquan Bay NWR Marc Ribauda Phil Silas |
| | | 25 8:30 AM Huntley Meadows Dave Boltz | | | | 28 7:30 AM Algonkian RP Larry Meade Elton Morel |
| <u>October</u> | | | | | | |
| | | 2 8:30 AM Long Branch Charlotte Friend Joanna Taylor | | | | 5 7:30 AM Silver Lake RP Larry Meade |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| October | | | | | | |
| 6 8 AM Dyke Marsh Friends of Dyke Marsh | | | | 10 8:30 AM Fort C F Smith Joanna Taylor | 11-13 Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival | 12 8 AM Bristoe Station Battlefield Park Elton Morel |
| | | 16 8:30 AM Eakin Park Catherine Kubo Jean Tatalias | | | 18-20 Cape May Weekend <i>Members only/ Reservations required</i> Gerco Hoogeweg | 19 8 AM Meadowood Elton Morel |
| | | 23 8:30 AM Ben Brenman Park Dave Boltz Phil Silas | | | | 26 8 AM Sky Meadows SP Steve Bruck |
| | | 30 8:30 AM Burke Lake Park Catherine Kubo Carolyn Williams | | | November | |
| 3 8 AM Dyke Marsh Friends of Dyke Marsh | | 6 8:30 AM Long Branch Charlotte Friend Jean Tatalias | | | | 2 8 AM Manassas NBP Elton Morel |
| | | | | | | 9 8 AM Occoquan Bay NWR Kurt Gaskill Marc Ribauda |

DIRECTIONS

NVBC Meeting (9/18) Church of the Covenant, 2666 Military Rd, Arlington, 22207. From intersection of Spout Run Pkwy and Lorcum Lane, go about a half mile on Lorcum, turn right onto Nellie Custis Dr at the bottom of the hill, and continue on Nellie Custis as it bears right and becomes Military Rd. Stay on Military and turn left into church drive just after passing traffic light at Marcey Rd. After entering church drive, turn right and go to lower lot. The door to Fellowship Hall, where meeting is held, is at the west end of the lot.

Algonkian Regional Park (9/28) From I-495, take Rt. 7 west 11 miles to Cascades Parkway north, and drive 3 miles to the park entrance, proceed on Fairway Drive turning left onto Volcano Island Drive, then turn right into parking lot. Meet at the parking lot beside restrooms and Park Shelter 1.

Ben Brenman Park (10/23) From I-395 take Duke St east about 1.5 miles to the park entrance on the right. Follow entrance road to the parking lot. Meet at the pond.

Bombay Hook X-trip (8/17) Take Route 50 across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Go north on Route 301. Turn right at Route 300. At Kenton, DE, go right on Route 42 to Leipsic.

From there go left on Route 9 to the entrance of the refuge.

Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park (10/12) 10708 Bristow Rd, Bristow, VA 20136. From I-95: Take Rt. 234 North (Exit 152B); travel 7.5 miles and make a left onto Independent Hill Drive. Then make immediate right onto Rt 619 (Bristow Road). Travel 7 miles and turn left onto Iron Brigade Unit Avenue. The parking lot is located on your left at the traffic circle. From I-66; Take Rt. 234 South (Exit 44). Travel 4.5 miles and turn right onto Rt. 28 (Nokesville Road). Travel 1.5 miles and turn left onto Rt. 619 (Bristow Road). Travel 0.25 miles, turn right onto Iron Brigade Unit Avenue and continue to parking lot. Meet in parking lot.

Burke Lake Park (10/30) From I-495, take exit 54 west (Braddock Road). Stay in right lane if you are coming from the North. On Braddock Road, go 1.5 miles and turn left onto Burke Lake Road. Go 4.7 miles and turn left onto Route 123 (Ox Road). Turn left at second traffic light (big parking signs) and then turn left immediately after the entrance booth. Park in the first lot on the right (by the mini-golf course)

Daniels Run Park (9/18) 3721 Tedrich Blvd, Fairfax, VA 22031. From the Capital Beltway, take US 50 W 2.7 mi to Fairfax Circle. Exit the circle SW on Old Lee

Highway. In 1.2 mi, turn left on Old Post Rd (just past Historic Blenheim on the right). Drive 1 ½ blocks to the end of the street. We have walk-day permission to park in the Country Club Hills pool parking lot.

Dyke Marsh (9/1, 10/6, 11/3) From Alexandria, take Mount Vernon Pkwy south. Cross I-495; continue 1.2 miles to Belle Haven Park entrance on left. Meet at south parking lot.

Eakin Park (10/16) From I-495, take Rt 50 west one mile to Prosperity Ave; turn left onto Prosperity and go one mile to parking lot on left.

Fort C F Smith (8/29, 10/10) From I-495 east, take Exit 72 (Spout Run Pkwy.). At traffic light, turn right on Lee Hwy. At successive traffic lights, turn left onto Spout Run Pkwy., then left onto Lorcom Lane, then right onto Fillmore St. Go one block on Fillmore, turn right onto N. 24th St. (watch for speed humps), and continue to park on left at 2411 N. 24th St. Meet in parking lot at east end of park. [Alternate route from Alexandria: Take G.W. Pkwy. north, take left exit onto Spout Run, then right exit onto Lorcom Lane, and follow remaining directions above.]

Huntley Meadows Park (8/24, 9/25) From Beltway, take Rt 1 south 3 mi. to Lockheed

Continued on next page

Blvd. Right on Lockheed; go 0.5 mi. to Harrison Lane, park entrance on left. Meet in parking lot.

Jones Point Park (9/11) From either US 1 or Washington Blvd (George Washington Memorial Parkway) in Alexandria, turn east on Franklin Street (one-way eastbound), then turn right on South Royal Street, then turn left on Jones Point Drive and continue to parking lot next to the playground. Meet in parking lot.

Leesylvania State Park (9/14) From I-495, take I-95 south about 14 mi. to Exit 156 (Dale City/Rippon Landing/Rte. 784). Following the posted highway signs for Leesylvania State Park, exit east on Rte. 784. Proceed eastward 1.1 mi. to US Rte. 1. Turn right (south) on Rte. 1 and go 0.9 miles to Neabsco Road. Immediately past the Wawa service station, turn left (east) on Neabsco Rd. and proceed 2 mi. to park entrance on right. After passing through the park entrance gate, go 2.2 miles to end of paved road and park in "Picnic Area" parking lot, immediately before turn-around circle at fishing pier. State fee area.

Long Branch Nature Area (9/4, 10/2, 11/6) From Rt 50, take Carlin Springs exit and go south on Carlin Spgs. 0.5 mile to Nature Center on left, just south of No. Va. Community Hospital. Meet in Nature Center parking lot.

Lake Fairfax Park (9/7) From I-495, take Rt 7 west (Leesburg Pike) for 7.2 miles, turn left on Baron Cameron Ave. In 0.3 miles, turn left on Lake Fairfax Drive then go 0.7 miles to the parking lot just past the Visitor Center on the right. Meet in the parking lot just south (below) of the Visitor Center.

Manassas National Battlefield Park (11/2) Meet at the Cracker Barrel, 10801 Battlefield Pkwy., just north of the intersection of I-66 and Rte. 234. US fee area.

Meadowood (10/19) From I-495, take I-95 south 7 miles to Lorton exit. Turn left on Route 642. Immediately after passing under RR tracks, (1/4 mile) turn right on Lorton Market Road, which soon becomes Gunston Cove Road. After crossing Route 1, road becomes Gunston Road. Go 1.8 miles to 10406 Gunston Road. (BLM, Lower Potomac Station Office). Park on the right next to the horse barns just before the field station building.

Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge (9/21, 11/9) From I-495, take I-95 south 9 miles to (left) Exit 161 (Woodbridge). South on Rt 1 about 2 miles to Dawson Beach Rd. Go left on Dawson Beach 0.7 mile to entrance gate. Meet in parking lot. Bring scope. US fee area.

Riverbend Park—Nature Center (8/31) From intersection of Georgetown Pk (Rt 193) and Old Dominion Dr (Rt 738) take Georgetown Pk west about ¼ mile to traffic light at Riverbend Rd. Turn right onto Riverbend; go 2 mi. to Jeffery Rd. Turn right and stay on Jeffrey about 1.5 mi., past the main park entrance. Jeffery makes a sharp right turn and dead ends in the Nature Center parking lot.

Silver Lake Regional Park (10/5) From I-495, take I-66 west 24 mi. to exit 40 (Rt 15). Turn south onto Rt 15 (toward Haymarket) and go 0.3 mi. to Rt 55. Turn right onto Rt 55 and go 0.9 mi. to Antioch Rd. Turn right onto Antioch and go 1.3 mi. to Silver Lake Rd. Turn right and

proceed to park entrance at 16198 Silver Lake Rd.

Sky Meadows State Park (10/26) From I-495, take I-66 west 42 mi. to exit for Rte. 17 north (Delaplane/Paris). North on Rte. 17 6.5 mi. to Rte. 710. Left into park; go 1 mi. to Visitor Center parking lot. Bring lunch. State fee area.

Virginia Society of Ornithology Chincoteague Weekend (9/13–15) For information, visit www.virginiabirds.net.

Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival (10/11–13) For information visit www.esvafestivals.org.

TRIP LEADERS

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Dave Boltz | 703-768-7499 |
| Steve Bruck | 703-425-8584 |
| Larry Cartwright | 703-941-3142 |
| Kurt Gaskill | 703-768-2172 |
| Elizabeth Fenton | 703-533-0851 |
| Charlotte Friend | 703-532-0207 |
| Catherine Kubo | 703-352-1238 |
| Larry Meade | 703-206-9030 |
| Elton Morel | 703-553-4860 |
| Frances Raskin | 202-330-1742 |
| Marc Ribaudou | 703-680-1134 |
| Phil Silas | 703-590-7286 |
| Jean Tatalias | 703-281-6099 |
| Joanna Taylor | 703-243-5989 |
| Carolyn Williams | 703-273-1961 |

MIGRATION HOTSPOT TRIPS *from p. 3*

www.biggestweekinamericanbirding.com.

There is a lot of information about the Magee Marsh boardwalk and warblers there. At the Ohio Department of Natural Resources web site, www.dnr.state.oh.us, there is valuable information and a link to the American Birding Association's *Birding* magazine article by Kenn Kaufman, "Magee: Anatomy of a Migrant Hotspot." Greg Miller of "Big Year" fame also has a website that provides detailed information on warbler migration through Ohio. For those of us in Northern Virginia, the location is within a long day's driving distance. We find that the best approach for us is to plan five days or a week at Magee Marsh. We spend time on the boardwalk every day and visit other birding areas such as Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. We saw 29 warbler species over the course of the week including Canada, Cape May, Hooded, Mourning, Orange-crowned, Wilson's, and Kirtland's. Our daily counts ranged from an unusually low 12 on one day, but 17 to 21 on all other days. Species and

numbers seen vary over a week as different species arrive to feed, rest, and fly on or to remain and nest like Yellow and Prothonotary warblers that could be seen daily.

During the Ohio trip, we also saw other birds such as American Woodcocks, Sora, Olive-sided Flycatchers, Blue-headed, Philadelphia, Warbling, and Yellow-throated Vireos, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes. At the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge we saw Sandhill Cranes and Black Terns in flight and American Pipits. If you like to photograph birds, the High Island sanctuaries, the South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center, the South Padre Island Convention Center and Magee Marsh are excellent sites for photographing birds with less specialized camera equipment. Often wind conditions keep migrant birds low in the wooded area of Magee Marsh and the migrants feed close to the boardwalks. The Convention Center, South Padre Island has a water feature which draws migrant birds which can be observed from some vantage points as little as 15 feet

away. Bird photography opportunities are also excellent at the Birding Center located next to the Convention Center. As a result small digital cameras with zoom lenses in the 200 to 300 mm focal length are sufficient to obtain good bird photographs.

—Pat and Neal Gause

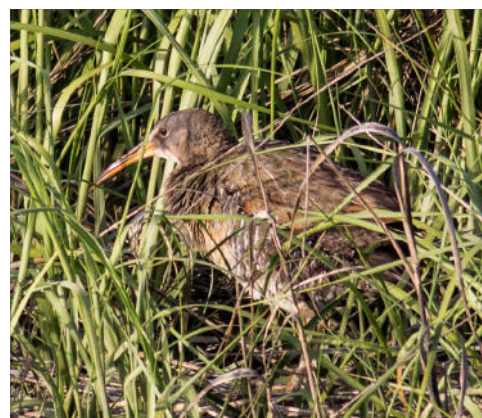
*Painted Bunting at South Padre Island
Photo by Neal Gause*



mon Terns, Black Skimmers, and American Oystercatchers were on their breeding grounds here.

Our final stop was Saxis Marsh where we found March Wrens, Seaside Sparrows, Clapper Rails, Yellow Warblers, Orchard Orioles, a Northern Harrier, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, and our only Song Sparrow. A Great Horned Owl flew out of the trees and over the marsh with several smaller birds in hot pursuit.

—Larry Meade



At Chincoteague (above, top to bottom): an American Oystercatcher with chick, a first-year Little Blue Heron, and a Clapper Rail photographed by Bill Millhouser

HIGHLAND COUNTY

Northern Virginia Bird Club members led by Marv Rubin and Beth Moore went on the annual spring trip to Highland County, May 31–June 2, 2013. Our weekend's tally of bird species was 88; highlights were Mourning Warblers, Bobolinks, Rose-Breasted Grosbeaks, and a pair of Eastern Screech-Owls fighting off a Black Rat Snake at their nesting site.

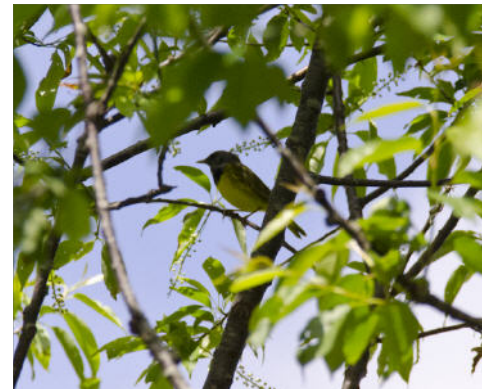
Marv Rubin led ten members of the NVBC on Friday afternoon to the Forks of Waters, where the group had fleeting glimpses of a warbling vireo and orchard oriole. There, we had good views of a small flock of Cedar Waxwings. Around Bluegrass, we had good views of Bobolinks.

On Friday afternoon Beth Moore and Amber Duncan surveyed a new birding route in Highland County south of McDowell off US 250. Beth and Amber forayed along remote Routes 614, 612, and 678, which traversed a variety of elevations, clear cut, secondary growth, and old growth habitats, often bordered by a babbling brook. Notable species encountered along this less-traveled route include: Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Waterthrush, Worm-Eating Warbler, and a variety of other shy warblers in the mid- to lower-story range. Please note that this route requires fording a small paved stream which is passable with higher clearance and AWD vehicles. We successfully forded the stream twice in a Honda two-wheel drive vehicle with standard clearance.

On Saturday the entire group drove to Paddy's Knob where there were a number of warblers heard and seen, including Mourning Warblers, and Rose-Breasted Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings. Following lunch back in Monterey, we drove through the Bluegrass Area listening to



Field Sparrow (above) and Mourning Warbler, photographed by Tom Blackburn on the Highland County trip

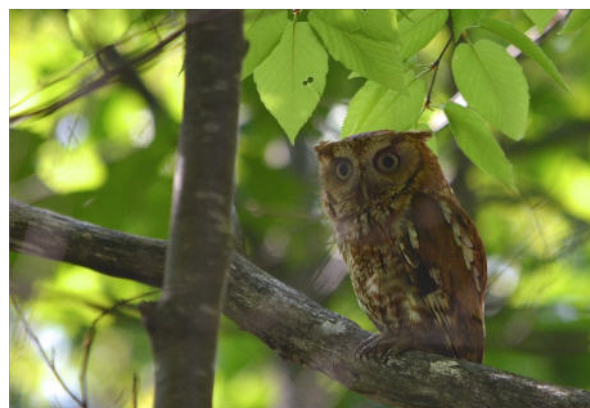


and seeing Eastern Meadowlarks and Bobolinks. We ended the day birding the Monterey area where we came across a pair of Eastern Screech-Owls successfully knocking a 5-6-foot Black Rat Snake off a tree trunk near their nest.

On Sunday, we drove to the Bluegrass Area to a private property. On the property and along the road, we heard five or six Golden-Winged Warblers and caught a glance of birds flying. Good views were obtained of a Chestnut-Sided Warbler, Field Sparrows, Indigo Buntings, and other species. In past years both Black and Yellow-Billed Cuckoos have been seen and heard, but this year were only heard.

—Marv Rubin

Eastern Screech-Owl in Highland County. Photo by Marv Rubin



To see photos in color, go to www.nvabc.org and click on the Siskin icon.

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JOIN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB

Northern Virginia Bird Club dues for 2013 are \$8 for Individual and \$12 for Family Membership. Members receive our quarterly newsletter, *The Siskin*. Checks for dues should be sent to: Northern Virginia Bird Club, Attn: Membership, P.O. Box 5812, Arlington, VA 22205-0812.

If you miss an issue of *The Siskin* or need to report an address or ZIP Code change, please send an email message to nvabc@verizon.net or leave a message for Charlotte Friend at 703-532-0207.

Please note: NVBC does not exchange, give away, or sell its membership list.

NVBC ON THE WEB

Current information and special notices about NVBC meetings, field trips, and other activities, along with a printable membership form, are posted on the club's website, www.nvabc.org. If you have information or pictures you would like to see on the website, please email the webmaster, Len Alfredson, at nvabc@verizon.net.

NVBC eMAIL EXCHANGE

By participating in the club's email exchange, you can get email notices of late updates to *The Siskin* and the field trip schedule. To join the exchange and receive a list of email ad-

resses for other participating NVBC members, send an email to nvabc@verizon.net. Put "EXCHANGE" in the subject field and your full name in the message area. You must place your name on the list in order to receive information about other members. The list is for NVBC members' use only.

General Meeting Dates: September 18, and November 20, 2013; February 19 and April 23, 2014.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, September 4, 7:30 PM, at Diane Marton's home. All club members are welcome at board meetings. For directions and information, or to have items put on the agenda, please call or email Diane Marton.

Deadline for next issue of *The Siskin*: The November issue will include activities through January 2012. Please send items for publication by **October 1, 2013** to the editor at dtella@cox.net.

CLUB CONTACTS

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Great Crested Flycatcher at Huntley Meadows Park. Photo by Larry Meade

