



The SISKIN

Newsletter of the Northern Virginia Bird Club

Vol. 65, No. 1

February 2020

www.nvabc.org

Inside

- Calendar of NVBC field trips, February 5 - May 2, 2020
- Cape May Trip Report
- VSO Spring meeting, May 1-3
- Program: Bringing Peregrine Falcons back to Virginia's Mountains, March 1

To see the newsletter photographs in color, go to www.nvabc.org and click on *The Siskin* icon

A reminder to pay your 2020 dues

If not paid, this will be the last issue you receive. *The Siskin* mailing label shows the year through which your dues are current or "CO" for complimentary. **Thanks!**

Chincoteague Spring Weekend Trip

The Chincoteague Spring Weekend club trip is scheduled for May 15-17 (Friday-Sunday). The trip is limited to 28 people and usually fills up very fast. NVBC membership is required. **Registration will open on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 6 am.** To sign up for this trip, email Elton Morel at eltonlmorel@verizon.net on that date. When signing up, please indicate whether you are interested in the boat trip (fee) on Sunday morning and a Saturday evening group dinner. If the trip is full, your name can be put on a waiting list.

Mid-May is an excellent time to visit the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Spring shorebird migration is in full swing with most birds in breeding plumage.

continued on p. 2

NVBC GENERAL MEETING—WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 8 PM

Birding Namibia and Northern Botswana

Speaker: Diane Marton

Photography by Josh Engel and Warren Marton

Birding Namibia and northern Botswana this past July with guide Josh Engel of Red Hill Birding turned out to be the "trip of a lifetime" for Diane and Warren Marton. Set amidst spectacular scenery—the world's oldest desert and highest sand dunes, a long coastline and a lush riverine forest—is world class birding. Think numerous hornbill and bustard species, Rüppell's Parrot, Rockrunner, Hartlaub's Francolins, and the iconic bird of the Okavango, Pel's Fishing Owl. Add in the palette in pink created by thousands of flamingoes and waterbirds at Walvis Bay. The uncommon Herero Chat, found only in the Namibia Escarpment and never easy to find, popped up in a shrub two feet away from the road. Namibia's only endemic bird, the Dune Lark, skittered around inches from Diane's feet as she stood motionless in red sand dunes. What could be better? But of course there is the African game, the highlight of the trip actually being one of the smaller, the African Wild Cat hunting doves (unsuccessfully) at a waterhole in Etosha National Park.

Diane is a retired children's librarian with Arlington County, VA. She is a longtime member of the Northern Virginia Bird Club. Rather than participating in local bird walks of late, she has been systematically removing English ivy and other invasives from her yard and replanting with native species. Warren is a retired project manager from the US Department of Energy, where he focused on fusion energy.

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: St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 4000 Lorcom Lane, Arlington, 22207. Directions are on page 5.



Dune Lark photographed by Josh Engel

Presidential Peenting

It's unfortunate when politics threatens the well-being of our beloved birds. Right now there are birds in our state that need our help because of both state and federal actions. The Virginia Society of Ornithology reports that "the expansion of the Hampton-Roads Bridge Tunnel (HRBT) will result in the loss of nesting habitat for more than 25,000 seabird adults and chicks. The South Island of the HRBT is an elevated artificial island that currently supports the largest seabird nesting colony in Virginia. The colony is comprised of the state-threatened Gull-Billed Tern as well as Royal Terns, Sandwich Terns, Common Terns, Black Skimmers and a variety of gull species." The solution to this problem would be to build an artificial island where these birds could find a new nesting site. This was more or less in the works until the Trump administration reinterpreted the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

to allow actions that now harm birds to take place so long as the harm is an indirect effect of the action. That means that the state is no longer under any obligation to build the island to save the nesting colony. A variety of organizations have gotten involved and scientists from Virginia Tech have been working with the state. However, everything seems to be at a standstill at this time. The Virginia Department of Transportation has not ruled out building the island, but they do not seem to be in any hurry. As birders, we can try to make a difference by writing to Virginia state officials including Governor Northam, the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Secretary of Transportation.

—Larry Meade

Photograph of seabirds on beach by Larry Meade



Chincoteague Spring Trip *from p. 1*

Most trips tally about 100 species, including such Eastern Shore specialties as Black-necked Stilts, American Oystercatchers, Piping Plovers, Whimbrels, Marbled Godwits, Little Blue Herons, Tricolored Herons, Cattle Egrets, Glossy Ibis, Least, Royal, and Common Terns, Black Skimmers, Clapper Rails, Seaside Sparrows, Chuck-will's-widows, Brown-headed Nuthatches and Boat-tailed Grackles. Last year's highlight birds were a singing Nelson's Sparrow in the marsh along the boardwalk nearest the hotel, Red Knots along Tom's Cove, and Royal Terns dancing in a synchronized courtship display.

Plans for the weekend include birding the Chincoteague NWR on Friday afternoon starting at 3:15 pm (optional) or on Saturday starting at 7:30 am. Activities on Saturday morning include birding along Beach Road, Swan Cove and Tom's Cove. We will also visit Chincoteague Island Park Trail, looking for land bird migrants, and Queens Sound Flats, the Chincoteague City mudflats and Mariner's Point. On Sunday morning, we will board a pontoon boat and travel along Chincoteague Inlet then visit Fishing Point at the end of Tom's Cove and, finally, Black Point Landing, all the while looking mostly

for shorebirds along the mudflats. Last year's boat trip ended with finding a flock of eighty Whimbrels. The cost of the boat trip will be about \$35 per person. The trip concludes at noon on Sunday.

We have obtained a special rate of \$92.00 per night, including tax, on twenty rooms for Friday and Saturday nights at the Best Western Chincoteague Island Hotel on Maddox Boulevard. A two-night stay is usually required. Hotel reservations must be made by April 15 to get this special group rate. Participants should make their own reservations by calling 800-553-6117 and be sure to say you are with the Northern Virginia Bird Club. Check-in time is 3 pm on Friday, May 15, and a 48-hour cancellation notice is required. Chincoteague NWR is a U.S. fee area.

—Elton Morel

NVBC Program on April 15, 2020:

Daphne Gemmill will speak on her work on Vieques Island in Puerto Rico

Cape May, October 2019: Cloudy, windy, sunny, rainy and some birds

The NVBC's 2019 Cape May trip started for many of us with the noon ferry ride from Lewes, DE to Cape May, NJ. As often is the case, we were able to see many interesting birds from the ferry. In the harbor we saw the expected gulls to start our trip list. In the bay we saw good numbers of Northern Gannets of all ages. We were thrilled to see a Parasitic Jaeger making a close flyby of the boat giving those of us in the right place at the right time a great view. Ducks were few and far between, but there were some Black Scoters around. At 3 pm the group visited the Garrett Family Preserve and found many Yellow-rumped Warblers. Great Egrets and a calling Clapper Rail caused some excitement.

Saturday morning was sunny and we headed out, without a beach walk, to Hereford Lighthouse and Gardens and the adjacent Hereford Inlet. Birding turned out to be good. In the gardens we found several warblers (including Pine) and a few Field Sparrows. Along Hereford Inlet we were treated to a nice show of Dunlins and Sanderlings, several American Oystercatchers, Royal and Forster's Terns and many different gulls. Large groups of Double-crested Cormorants were seen flying over. Nummy Island, a traditional stop for the group, was quiet. We did see a juvenile Cooper's Hawk and a Tricolored Heron. In the far distance we saw many Brant. Stone Harbor Point yielded more Brant and in the parking lot we saw Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets. That was a lot of fun. Over the water, there were a few scoters and more Northern Gannets.

Saturday afternoon was spent at the Cape May Hawk Watch and the Meadows. Hawk migration was rather slow and disappointing this year, but ducks were cooperative. We saw Ruddy Duck, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers and even a Eurasian Wigeon. We also spotted a Pied-billed Grebe and a lone Common Gallinule. The best bird, unfortunately not seen by all people, was a juvenile Golden Eagle. Earlier in the day this bird was reported at the Hawk Watch. The winds were in our favor and the bird decided to hang out in the area. Late afternoon in the Meadows provided a nice drake Wood Duck and a late

American Avocet. A reported Least Bittern was missed by all. We did see a nice Merlin, though.

Higbee Beach and Dyke is a traditional stop for Morning Flight. The winds on Sunday were unfavorable which means they were not from the northwest and virtually no morning flight was reported. With low clouds, rain was in the forecast. Finding birds was hard, but we managed to see many Sharp-shinned Hawks, a few Northern Flickers, a Gray Catbird and a Swamp Sparrow. Along the canal we did see two Black Scoters. By 10 am the rain started to fall in earnest and birds were gone and so were the birders. Some of us visited the CMBO Northwood Center and a pavilion at the Cape May State Park. By 2:30 pm the rains and storm had passed through, but the sea still looked like it would be choppy. This was not the case though and we had a fairly pleasant return ferry trip. We saw more Northern Gannets as well as several groups of scoters. In Lewes Gerco photographed a Cormorant on the jetty and this turned out to be a Great Cormorant. Not a bad bird to end the trip with.

We saw over 102 species with Double-crested Cormorants being the most numerous followed by Brant (likely over counted), Sanderling, Tree Swallow and Yellow-rumped Warbler (likely under counted). Given the lack of ducks and the fact we missed seeing a Northern Harrier, we did pretty well and certainly had fun.

—Gerco Hoogeweg
—Larry Meade



Photographs by Gerco Hoogeweg:
Above: Juvenile Cooper's Hawk at Nummy Island

- Below beginning from left:
- Black Scoter in Cape May Ferry Harbor photographed from the ferry
 - Ruddy Ducks at Cape May State Park
 - Tricolored Heron in flight at Nummy Island



Upcoming Trips and Events

Compiled by Elton Morel

Note:

- Beginning birders are welcome on all trips.
- When reservations are required, please call one of the trip leaders. Phone numbers are below.
- If in doubt about a trip because of weather, please call one of the leaders.
- Check the NVBC website for updated information about trips: <http://www.nvabc.org/field-trips-this-month>.
- To receive email notices, join the NVBC eMail Exchange. For sign-up directions see back page of *The Siskin*.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																							
February																													
<p style="text-align: center;">Trip Leaders</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 30%;">Jeremy Beck</td><td>703-517-1816</td></tr> <tr><td>Dave Boltz</td><td>703-599-8305</td></tr> <tr><td>Larry Cartwright</td><td>703-941-3142</td></tr> <tr><td>Toby Hardwick</td><td>703-201-1517</td></tr> <tr><td>Bert Harris</td><td>615-440-0666</td></tr> <tr><td>Ken Hunt</td><td>319-354-1079</td></tr> <tr><td>David Ledwith</td><td>703-933-9477</td></tr> <tr><td>Larry Meade</td><td>571-275-2523</td></tr> <tr><td>Elton Morel</td><td>703-907-9951</td></tr> <tr><td>Tom Nardone</td><td>703-946-7738</td></tr> <tr><td>Phil Silas</td><td>703-987-0817</td></tr> <tr><td>Dixie Sommers</td><td>703-969-7931</td></tr> <tr><td>Jean Tatalias</td><td>571-447-7977</td></tr> </table>		Jeremy Beck	703-517-1816	Dave Boltz	703-599-8305	Larry Cartwright	703-941-3142	Toby Hardwick	703-201-1517	Bert Harris	615-440-0666	Ken Hunt	319-354-1079	David Ledwith	703-933-9477	Larry Meade	571-275-2523	Elton Morel	703-907-9951	Tom Nardone	703-946-7738	Phil Silas	703-987-0817	Dixie Sommers	703-969-7931	Jean Tatalias	571-447-7977	<p>5 8:30 AM Long Branch Dixie Sommers</p>	<p>8 8 AM Riverbend - Visitor Center Tom Nardone Elton Morel</p>
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March 1																													
<p>5:00 PM Woodcock Display at Dusk - Huntley Meadows Hike/Bike Trail Larry Cartwright Phil Silas</p>		<p>4 8:30 AM Long Branch Tom Nardone</p>		<p>7 8 AM Occoquan Bay NWR Phil Silas Toby Hardwick</p>																									
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		<p>17 8:30 AM Neabsco Regional Park - Boardwalk Phil Silas</p>		<p>21 8 AM Huntley Meadows Larry Meade</p>																									
		<p>25 8:30 AM Eakin Park Jean Tatalias</p>		<p>28 8 AM Clifton Institute Bert Harris Elton Morel</p>																									

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Bird Walks at Local Parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, second Saturdays, 8 am. Meet at the parking lot. Visit the Loudoun Wildlife web site, www.loudounwildlife.org/events/ • Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, fourth Saturday, 8 am Meet at Education Center. www.loudounwildlife.org/events/ • Dyke Marsh, Sundays, 8 am See directions. Visit the Friends of Dyke Marsh web site, www.fodm.org • Eakin Park, Mondays, 7:30 am Meet at Prosperity Ave parking lot. Leader: Carolyn Williams • Great Falls National Park, Sundays, 8 am Meet in the main parking lot, closest to the Park Visitor Center. • Huntley Meadows Park, Mondays, 7 am (Apr-Sep) 8 am (Oct-Mar) Meet in parking lot. Leader: Harry Glasgow • Merrimac Farm, last Sunday, 8 am Meet at Merrimac Farm Stone House. www.pwconserve.org/events/index.html#birds 			<p>April 1 8:30 AM Long Branch Elton Morel</p>	<p>4 8 AM Aquia Landing BP Elton Morel David Ledwith</p>		
			<p>8 8:30 AM Bles Park Jean Tatalias Larry Meade</p>	<p>11 7:30 AM Leopold's Preserve Elton Morel Toby Hardwick</p>		
			<p>15 8:30 AM Laurel Hill Equestrian Center Dixie Sommers</p> <p>NVBC Meeting 8 PM</p>	<p>18 7:30AM Silver Lake RP Toby Hardwick Larry Meade</p>		
			<p>22 8:30 AM Meadowood Recreation Area Larry Cartwright Phil Silas</p>	<p>25 7:30 AM Huntley Meadows Hike/Bike Trail Ken Hunt Larry Meade</p>		
			<p>29 8:30 AM Fort C. F. Smith Jeremy Beck</p>	<p>May 2 7:30 AM Leesylvania SP Ken Hunt Elton Morel</p>		

DIRECTIONS

NVBC Meeting (2/19, 4/15) St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 4000 Lorcom Ln, Arlington 22207, at the intersection of Lorcom Ln and Military Rd. From the intersection of Spout Run Pkwy and Lorcom Ln, go about a half mile on Lorcom to the second traffic light. Turn left onto Military and enter the first driveway on the right. There is some parking near the Church's back entrance and a bigger lot up the driveway. There is on-street parking. Enter at the back door facing Military Rd which leads to the Undercroft where the meeting is held.

Aquia Landing Beach Park (2/15, 4/4) 2846 Brooke Rd, Stafford 22554 From southbound I-95 towards Stafford, take exit 140 to Stafford, then left (east) on Courthouse Rd (Rt 630), go 3.5 mi. and turn right on Andrew Chapel Rd (Rt 629), go 0.9 mi. and under the railroad bridge to a slight left onto Brooke Rd (Rt 608), go 4.4 mi. to the park entrance, continue past park entrance gate to the parking lot at the end of the road.

Meet in parking lot.

Blandy Experimental Farm (2/29) 400 Blandy Farm Rd, Boyce 22620 Take I-66 west 42 miles to exit for Rt 17 north (Delaplane/Paris). Continue on Rte. 17 one mile and turn left (west) onto Rte. 50. Go about 8 mi., and turn left at sign for VA State Arboretum. (If you reach Rte. 340, you have gone too far.) Meet in parking lot.

Bles Park (4/8) 44830 Riverside Pkwy., Ashburn 20147 Take Rt 7 west to Loudoun County Pkwy. Turn right onto Loudoun County Pkwy and proceed 0.2 mi. Turn right onto George Washington Blvd and go 0.8 mi. to Riverside Pkwy. Turn left and proceed 1.1 mi. to park entrance 44830 Riverside Pkwy. Meet at parking lot

Burke Lake Park (2/12) 7315 Ox Rd, Fairfax Station 22039 From I-495, take exit 54 west (Braddock Rd). Stay in right lane of exit if you are coming from the north. On Braddock Rd, go 1.5 mi. and turn left onto Burke Lake Rd. Go 4.7 mi. and turn left onto Rt 123 (Ox Rd). Turn

left at second traffic light (big park signs), and turn left immediately after the entrance booth. Park in the first lot on the right (by the mini-golf course).

Clifton Institute (3/28) 6712 Blantyre Rd, Warrenton 20187 Take I-66 West to exit 40, to merge onto US-15 south towards Haymarket (0.4 mi), then turn right onto VA-55 West. Drive 5 mi. and turn left onto Blantyre Rd. Proceed 5.6 mi. and then turn right on to a dirt road. Drive northwest for about 0.5 mi. between two lakes and park in the parking lot below the main house. Meet outside the house.

Dyke Marsh (2/19, 3/11) 6401 George Washington Memorial Pkwy, Alexandria 22307 (Belle Haven Park and Marina). From Alexandria, take George Washington Pkwy south. Cross I-495, continue 1.2 mi. to Belle Haven Park entrance on the left. Meet at south parking lot.

Eakin Park (3/25) 3401 Prosperity Ave, Fairfax 22031 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.

Directions.

Fort C.F. Smith (4/29) 2411 24th St N, Arlington 22207 From I-66 east, take exit 72 (Spout Run Pkwy). At traffic light, turn right on ee Hwy. At successive traffic lights, turn left onto Spout Run Pkwy, then left onto Lorcom Ln, 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. Meet in parking lot at east end of park. From Alexandria: take GW Pkwy north, take left exit onto Spout Run, then right exit onto Lorcom Ln, and follow remaining directions above.

Huntley Meadows Hike and Bike Trail (3/1, 4/25) From I-495, take Rt 1 south 0.5 mi to Rt 633 (S. King Hwy). Turn right (west); go 2.5 miles to park entrance and lot on left (just before Telegraph Rd).

Huntley Meadows Park (2/26, 3/21) 3701 Lockheed Blvd, Alexandria 22306 From I-495, take Rt 1 south 3 mi. to Lockheed Blvd. Turn right on Lockheed and go 0.5 mi. to Harrison Ln to park entrance on left. Meet in parking lot.

Laurel Hill Equestrian Center (4/15) Lorton From I-495, take I-95 south about 13 mi. to exit 163 (Lorton Rd). Continue 1.4 mi. west on Rt 642/ Lorton Rd, then turn left on Rt 611/ Furnace Rd then an immediate right onto Dairy Rd. Proceed to and meet in the parking lot.

Leesylvania State Park (5/2) 2001 Daniel K Ludwig Dr, Woodbridge 22191 From I-495, take I-95 south about 14 mi. to exit 156 (Dale City/ Rippon Landing/Rt 784). Following the posted highway signs for Leesylvania State Park, exit east on Rt 784. Proceed eastward 1.1 mi. to Rt 1. Turn right (south) on Rt 1 and go 0.9 mi. to Neabsco Rd. 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 mi. to end of paved road and park in "Picnic Area" parking lot, immediately before turn-around circle at fishing pier. State fee area.

Leopold's Preserve (4/11) 16283 Thoroughfare Rd, Haymarket 20169 From I-66 west, take exit 40 to Rt 15 toward Haymarket/Leesburg. Turn left onto Rt 15 south. Turn right onto Rt 55 and go 1.7 mi. to Thoroughfare Rd.

Turn left onto Thoroughfare and go 0.3 mi. There are parking lots on both sides of the road. Meet in the right hand (west) parking lot. The left hand (east) parking lot can be used for overflow parking.



Bald Eagle at the Prince William County Landfill photographed by Larry Meade

Long Branch Nature Area (2/5, 3/4, 4/1) 625 S Carlin Springs Rd, Arlington 22204 Take Rt 50, east from Fairfax or west from Rosslyn to Carlin Springs exit. Go south on Carlin Springs 0.5 mi. to Nature Center on left, just south of N. Va Community Hospital on left. Meet at Nature Center parking lot.

Mason Neck State Park (2/22) 7301 High Point Rd, Lorton 22079 From I-495, take I-95 south 7 mi. to Lorton exit. Left on Rt 642 to Rt 1. Right on Rt 1 to Rt 242 (Gunston Rd). Left on Rt 242, go 4 mi. to Mason Neck Management Area. Turn right, follow paved road to end at Visitor Center. State fee area.

Meadowood Recreation Area (4/22) 10406 Gunston Rd, Lorton 22079 From I-495, take I-95 south 7 mi. to Lorton exit. Left on Rt 642. Immediately after passing under railroad tracks (0.25 mi.) turn right on Lorton Market Rd, which soon becomes Gunston Cove Rd. After crossing Rt 1, road becomes Gunston Rd. Go 1.8 miles to Meadowood on right. (BLM, Lower Potomac Station

Office). Park on right next to horse barns just before field station building.

Neabsco Regional Park - Boardwalk (3/17) 15125 Blackburn Rd, Woodbridge 22191 From I-495, take I-95 south about 14 mi. to exit 156 (Dale City/Rippon Landing/Rt. 784). Take exit 156A for Rt 784 east toward Rippon Landing. Continue 0.7 mi. cross Rt 1 where Dale Blvd becomes Rippon Blvd and continue down the hill another 0.4 mi. to a stop sign and turn right on Blackburn Rd. The park parking lot is then 0.2 mi. away on the left.

Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge (3/7) 13950 Dawson Beach Rd, Woodbridge 22191 From I-495, take I-95 south 9 mi. to (left) exit 161 (Woodbridge). Go south on Rt 1 about 2 mi. to left turn onto Dawson Beach Rd. Continue on Dawson Beach 0.7 mi. to entrance gate. Meet in parking lot. US fee area.

Riverbend Park (Visitor Center) (2/8) 8700 Potomac Hills St, Great Falls 22066 From I-495, take Rt 193 west 5 mi. to Rt 603 (Riverbend Rd). Turn right onto Rt 603, go 2 mi. to Jeffery Rd. Turn right onto Jeffery and go 0.8 mi. to main park entrance sign on right. Turn right and continue 0.5 mi to Visitor Center parking lot. Meet in front of Visitor Center.

Silver Lake Park (4/18) 16198 Silver Lake Rd, Haymarket 20169 From I-495, take I-66 west 24 miles to exit 40 (Rt 15). Turn south onto Rt 15 (toward Haymarket) and go 0.3 miles to Rt 55. Turn right onto Rt 55 and go 0.9 miles to Antioch Rd. Turn right onto Antioch and go 1.3 miles to Silver Lake Rd. Turn right and proceed to park entrance and continue to parking lot next to the lake. Meet in parking lot.

Widewater State Park (3/14) 101 Widewater State Park Rd, Stafford 22554 From I-95, take exit 148 to Quantico Marine Corps Base and follow signs to Widewater State Park. Left on Russell Road. Right on Route 1 South, go 1 mi. Left turn on Telegraph Road, go 0.5 mi. and turn left on Widewater Road. Widewater Rd. (Route 611) turns into Arkendale Rd. (Route 633) after about four miles. Follow this road for about 2 mi. and cross railroad tracks. Entrance to park Visitor Center entrance is about 2.5 mi. on right. Meet at the Visitor Center. State fee area.

2020 VSO Annual Meeting May 1-3, Williamsburg

Save the date – May 1 – 3, 2020 – and plan to attend the VSO Annual Meeting in Williamsburg, VA. Headquarters will be the Fort Magruder Inn and Conference Center, 6945 Pocahontas Trail, Williamsburg, VA. Room rates are \$119 plus tax.

Williamsburg is a family friendly destination! While you're birding the local birding hotspots, your spouse and family can enjoy nearby visitor destinations like Busch Gardens, Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown, and unique shopping venues like Merchant's Square and Premium Outlets.

If you prefer to camp, we suggest Chickahominy Riverfront Park or Newport News Park.

Annual Meeting Fee/Registration fee: \$45 and Banquet ticket: \$35.

Online registration will be available March 1, 2020 at the VSO web site; you'll be able to pay by credit card/debit card/Paypal. Of course, we'll also accept paper registrations and checks. You don't have to be a VSO member to attend the annual meeting.

A theme of this annual meeting is "Reduce, reuse, recycle." We're working with the hotel to reduce single-use plastics and we're asking meeting attendees to help us.

- Bring your own tote bag. We're not providing bags at registration.

- Bring your own water bottle. We'll have water on field trips to fill your bottles.
- We're reducing paper handouts (not eliminating) and will encourage folks to accept registration materials by email in advance. Print out and bring only what you need. Or save the PDFs to your phone or tablet.
- We're ordering lanyards with the intention of passing them on to next year's host club as well as asking participants to turn theirs in to us at the end of the meeting for reuse next year.

Our banquet speaker will be Dr. Bryan Watts, Director of the Center for Conservation Biology at W&M/VCU and Mitchell A. Byrd Professor of Conservation Biology.

We look forward to seeing you in Williamsburg in May 2020.

Questions: Contact Meeting Chair Rexanne Bruno at rexannebruno@gmail.com.

—*Virginia Society of Ornithology*

Bringing Peregrine Falcons Back to Virginia's Mountains



National Park Service biologist, Rolf Gubler, will give a talk on March 1, 2020, at 2 pm on the Peregrine Falcon Restoration Project at Shenandoah National Park. A team brings at-risk peregrine falcon chicks from eastern Virginia bridge nest sites to Virginia's mountains, once part of their historic range. The team hopes the birds will imprint on the park's cliffs and return as breeding adults. This project boosts mountain peregrine populations and aids in the survival of bridge nest peregrine chicks where fledging is often difficult due to insufficient updrafts.

Peregrine falcons were used for hunting or falconry as early as 2000 B.C. in China and Egypt and in World War II, both the British/U.S. and the German armies had a falcon corps to intercept the opponent's homing pigeons.

Peregrines are found in rural and urban environments and on every continent except Antarctica.

This free, open to the public meeting will be held at the Mount Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria near US 1 and a mile from the George Washington Memorial Parkway. An informal social, beginning at 1:30 pm will precede the presentation.

This program is sponsored by the Friends of Dyke Marsh, the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, the Virginia Society of Ornithology, and the Northern Virginia Bird Club.

Peregrine Falcon (left) photographed by Larry Meade

*National Park Service
Photograph of Rolf
Gruber with Peregrine
Falcon,*



NORTHERN VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB
P.O. BOX 5812
ARLINGTON, VA 22205-0812

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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**DATED
MATERIAL**

JOIN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB

Northern Virginia Bird Club dues for 2020 are \$10 for Individual and \$15 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. Or join or renew online at the club's web site, <http://www.nvabc.org/join/>.

If you miss an issue of *The Siskin* or need to report an address or ZIP Code change, please send an email message to lgmeade@gmail.com or leave a message for Elizabeth Fenton at 703-533-0851.

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

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, Jeremy Beck at jghyll+nvabc@gmail.com.

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, send an email to lgmeade@gmail.com. Put "EXCHANGE" in the subject field and your full name in the message area. You will receive a response from nvbc-exchange@googlegroups.com. The list is for NVBC members' use only.

General Meeting Dates: February 19, April 15, September (tbd), and November (tbd), 2020.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, February 27, 2020, 7:30 pm, at Diane Marton's home. All club members are welcome at board meetings. For directions or to have items put on the agenda, please call or email Diane Marton at dsdm42@gmail.com.

Thanks to the mailing crew: Many thanks to the November mail out crew: Diane Marton, Dixie Sommers, Jean Tatalias, and Joanna Taylor.

Deadline for next issue of *The Siskin*: The April issue will include activities through June 2020. Please send items for publication by **March 15, 2020** to the editors at siskineditor@verizon.net.

CLUB CONTACTS

President: Larry Meade, 571-275-2523

Vice President, Programs: David Farner, 443-643-6141

Vice President, Field Activities: Elton Morel, 703-907-9951

Secretary: Diane Marton, 703-527-7360

Treasurer: Jean Tatalias, 703-281-6099

Directors: Jeremy Beck, 703-517-1816
Phil Silas, 703-987-0817

Joanna Taylor, 703-243-5989

Directors Emeritus: Len Alfredson,
Charlotte Friend, Don Wiesnet

Membership: Elizabeth Fenton, 703-533-0851

Webmaster, www.nvabc.org: Jeremy Beck, jghyll+nvabc@gmail.com

Editors, *The Siskin*: Pat and Neal Gause, 703-476-3903

Administrator, NVBC Facebook Group: Allie Guidry (please contact through Facebook page)

NVBC email: lgmeade@mail.com