

The SISKIN

Newsletter of the Northern Virginia Bird Club

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August 2015

www.nvabc.org

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

New Club Officer and Dues Structure

At the Club meeting in April, members approved the slate of officers nominated for re-election as announced in the April *Siskin*. Re-elected were President, Larry Meade; Vice-President for Field Activities, Elton Morel; Secretary, Diane Marton; and Treasurer, Jean Tatalias; as well as Directors, Emily Caven, Catherine Kubo, and Joanna Taylor.

In addition, David Farner was elected as Vice-President for Programs. David is new to the Board but many of us know him from meetings and bird walks. He is currently Park Manager for Gulf Branch Nature Center and Fort C. F. Smith Park. David has a keen interest in Civil War history as well as in birds.

Also at the April meeting, the membership approved a recommendation from the Board to change the dues structure to \$10 for an individual membership and \$15 for a family membership. This is the first dues increase in a decade for the Club and it will allow us to continue to attract great speakers for our programs and continue our youth scholarship program. The new dues structure goes into effect for the upcoming 2016 year.

—Jean Tatalias

NVBC GENERAL MEETING—WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 8 PM

The Wildlife of Tanzania

Speaker Bill Young

The Wildlife of Tanzania presentation will take you on a 30-day safari through East Africa. In March of this year, Bill Young visited 11 parks in Tanzania, seeing about 450 species of birds, 50 species of mammals and countless other nature wonders. Bill will show pictures and video of his experiences with hornbills, turacos, rollers, bee-eaters, and many other type of birds, as well as lions, elephants, giraffes, hippos, rhinos, and a broad array of other wildlife.

Bill Young is a writer and birder from Arlington, Virginia. Last year, his book *The Fascination of Birds: From the Albatross to the Yellowthroat* was published by Dover Publications. It examines the relationship between birds and a broad range of subjects, including biology, ecology, literature, music, history, politics, economics, religion, geography, physics, chemistry, linguistics, the visual arts, the performing arts, sports, and comedy. Bill as William Young posts his nature videos on his YouTube channel.

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.

Grey-crowned Cranes photographed by Bill Young



Presidential Peentings

The Northern Virginia Bird Club specializes in conducting what are, in my humble opinion, some of the best local bird walks and out of town birding trips around. However, there are several other great local birding and conservation organizations that you might also be interested in checking out. The Audubon Society of Northern Virginia (ASNV) is a chapter of National Audubon which sponsors various workshops and classes in addition to field trips and its excellent Audubon at Home program. Many of our members are also involved in ASNV and the NVBC has scheduled some joint walks with them. The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is another group that is heavily involved in conservation and education. They sponsor field trips, bird and butterfly counts, stream monitoring, kid friendly events, and much more. The Prince William Conservation Alliance fights the good fight to preserve wildlife habitat in their county while also sponsoring a variety of events such as the Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm. The Friends of Huntley Meadows and the Friends of Dyke Marsh (FODM) do important work to keep these two jewels of our region alive and well. Without the tireless efforts of the FODM, the upcoming restoration of Dyke Marsh would likely never have happened. All of these groups are huge assets to our community and I hope you get a chance to get involved in some of them.

—Larry Meade



*Brown Thrasher at Green Spring Gardens Park.
Photographed by Larry Meade*

Trillium Trail ...in search of Cerulean Warblers and spring migrants



Acadian Flycatcher photographed by Bill Millhouser



*NVBC birder group photos by Neal Gause
Birders also enjoyed the spring flowers including
Yellow Lady's slipper Photo by Pat Gause*

Twenty-four NVBC birders enjoyed a foggy walk along the Trillium Trail in Fauquier County on May 9 led by David Ledwith and Elton Morel.

Our day was both frustrating and exhilarating. For most of the morning we were birding in thick, misting fog. Species diversity was really low -- we managed to find 36 species, but the quality turned out to be excellent.

The highlight of our walk was a remarkably cooperative singing Kentucky Warbler. This bird was on the Appalachian Trail (AT) a couple of hundred yards west of the main gravel road and up the steep, rocky, wooded ravine along the AT trail. The bird was so busy singing on a branch, we even got scope views of the bird. And of course, the Cerulean Warblers were singing everywhere around us but were very difficult to locate in the fog-shrouded trees. We managed a few good looks at these birds. Other highlights of birds seen fairly well were of a Worm-eating Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Wood Thrush, Acadian Flycatcher and of course the ubiquitous American Redstarts. Yellow-throated Vireos were also present, but only a few of us managed any kind of look at these birds.

I suspect we missed a few migrant warblers because of the foggy condition.

—Elton Morel



Chincoteague Weekend Trip

Twenty-three members of the Northern Virginia Bird Club went on our May 15-17 weekend spring trip to Chincoteague. We collectively saw and/or heard 97 bird species

Our weekend started with a drive around the Wildlife Loop at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. We saw an excellent variety of herons, egrets and shorebirds. Amongst a fairly large group of Glossy Ibis, David Ledwith spotted a White-faced Ibis. The views of this bird were difficult because of the long-distance and heat shimmer, but we managed to observe all of the key field marks and take many photos for documentation.

We then went down Beach Road to the south beach parking area where I had earlier located a nesting Piping Plover protected from predators by a wire cage. I was so focused on this spot that I passed right by what was probably the bird of the trip. Larry Wright showed a photo of a bird, asking if I had seen it. I was astonished — it was an American Golden Plover in nearly complete breeding plumage. We walked back to the location of the bird and frantically searched for it for several minutes until we spotted it at a different location. The bird was amazingly cooperative allowing all of us to get multiple scope views and photographs. It even walked right next to a breeding plumage Black-bellied Plover for comparison. We had the additional luck of finding what turned out to be our only Whimbrels and Marbled Godwits of the trip packed up against the shoreline of Tom's Cove at high tide.

Repeating last year's luck, a search for Chuck-will's-widow at sunset on Friday in the parking lot entrance to the Wildlife Loop was remarkably successful. We heard several "Chucks" all around us but didn't see one until we walked a short ways down the Marsh trail. As we crossed the Wildlife

Loop road, Twila Frieders spotted a dark object perched up on a stump about two feet off the ground — it was a female 'Chuck' perched up right on the side of the trail. We had excellent scope views of this very cooperative bird and even got to see the bird in flight chasing prey before returning again to its perch.

On Saturday morning, we started our birding by walking to the new boardwalk at the entrance to the refuge. There we heard many Clapper Rails and then found two rails walking below and under the boardwalk for several minutes. We then took a short walk around the Woodland Trail where we found Pine Warblers, Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, White-eyed Vireo and Brown-headed Nuthatches. Surprisingly, we did not find any spring migrants passing through.

In the afternoon, we went on the Wash Flats bus trip. While we enjoyed seeing the ponies including the newborns, we failed to find any Gull-billed Terns and it wasn't particularly birdy. In an effort to find Gull-billed Terns, we then went to the Queen Sound Flats. Luck wasn't with us for finding the Gull-bills but we enjoyed good looks at the Common Tern colony and Black-necked Stilts along the causeway

On Sunday morning, we finished the trip at Saxis Wildlife Management Area on the western side of Accomack County. We had excellent views of many singing Seaside

Sparrows, but the Marsh Wrens weren't cooperating. We could hear a few fairly well but had to settle for fleeting, long-distance views of the bird when it occasionally performed its display flight. We ended the morning at Saxis by observing an amorous pair of Peregrine Falcons atop their nest box at Drum Point across the Messongo Creek.

—Elton Morel



American Golden Plover Photograph by Larry Wright at Chincoteague

Highland County Weekend Trip



Baltimore Oriole at nest

Ten NVBC members participated in the 2015 spring trip to Highland County, June 5-7. The participants stayed at the Highland Inn, with breakfast each morning, and had group dinners at High's Restaurant in Monterey, Virginia. A total of 77 species were seen or heard (16 heard only). Highlights of the trip were sightings of Red-headed Woodpecker, Bobolink, Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian and Mourning Warblers, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. The pair of Baltimore Orioles made repeated visits to a nest. The usual targeted Golden-winged Warblers, along with an Alder Flycatcher, were heard but refused to show themselves to the group

—Marv Rubin
Photographs by Libby Lyons



Yellow-billed Cuckoo

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/trips.htm>.
- To receive email notices, join the NVBC eMail Exchange. For sign-up directions see back page of the newsletter.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>August</u>						
Trip Leaders Dave Boltz 703-768-7499 Larry Cartwright 703-941-3142 David Farner 443-643-6141 Elizabeth Fenton 703-533-0851 Allie Guidry 703-912-1490 David Ledwith 703-933-9477 Larry Meade 703-206-9030 Paul Mocko 703-243-4987 Elton Morel 703-553-4860 Pete Peters 413-320-8866 Marc Ribaud 703-680-1134 Phil Silas 703-590-7286 Jean Tatalias 571-447-7977						15 Bombay Hook X-Trip Members only/ Registration Required Larry Meade Marc Ribaud
						22 7:30 AM Huntley Meadows Larry Meade
				27 8:30 AM Potomac Overlook RP Paul Mocko		29 7:30 AM Riverbend Park - Nature Center Larry Meade
30 8 AM Dyke Marsh Friends of Dyke Marsh (FODM) 7 PM Swift/Nighthawk Watch David Farner <u>Call leader for meeting place and</u> <u>directions</u>		<u>September</u>	2 8:30 AM Long Branch Larry Cartwright Allie Guidry			5 7:30 AM Huntley Meadows - Hike & Bike Trail Larry Cartwright David Ledwith
			9 8:30 AM Eakin Park Allie Guidry Jean Tatalias		11-13 VSO Chincoteague Weekend	12 7:30 AM Leesylvania SP Marc Ribaud Phil Silas
			16 8:30 AM Lubber Run Park Elizabeth Fenton			19 7:30 AM Algonkian RP Elton Morel
			23 8:30 AM Huntley Meadows - Hike & Bike Trail Pete Peters Jean Tatalias NVBC Meeting 8PM			26 7:30 AM Occoquan Bay NWR David Ledwith Phil Silas
			30 8:30 AM Fort CF Smith Elizabeth Fenton Paul Mocko	<u>October</u>		3 8 AM Aquia Landing Elton Morel

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>October</u> 4 8 AM Dyke Marsh FODM			7 8:30 AM Long Branch Elizabeth Fenton		9-11 Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival	10 8 AM Silver Lake SP David Ledwith Phil Silas
			14 8:30 AM Eakin Park Elizabeth Fenton Jean Tatalias			17 8 AM Sky Meadows SP Marc Ribaudó
			21 8:30 AM Ben Brenman Park Larry Cartwright			24 8 AM Meadowood Recreation Area Elton Morel
			28 8:30 AM Burke Lake Park Pete Peters Jean Tatalias			31 8 AM Bristoe Station Battlefield Park David Ledwith Elton Morel
<u>November</u> 1 8 AM Dyke Marsh FODM			4 8:30 AM Long Branch Larry Cartwright Allie Guidry			7 8 AM Occoquan Bay NWR David Ledwith Marc Ribaudó

DIRECTIONS

NVBC Meeting (9/23) 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.

Algonkian Regional Park (9/19) 47001 Fairway Dr, Sterling 20165 From I-495, take Rt 7 west 11 miles (mi.) to Cascades Pkwy north and drive 3 mi. to the park entrance. Proceed on Fairway Dr turning left onto Volcano Island Dr, then turn right into parking lot. Meet at the parking lot beside restrooms and Park Shelter 1.

Aquia Landing Beach Park (10/3) 2846 Brooke Rd, Stafford 22554 From south-bound 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 the parking lot.

Ben Brenman (10/21) 4800 Brenman Park Dr, Alexandria, VA 22304 From I-395 take Duke St east about 1.5 mi. to the park entrance on the right. Follow entrance road to the parking lot. Meet at the pond.

Bombay Hook X-trip (8/15) Take Rt 50 across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Go north 34 mi. on Rt 301. Turn right at Rt 300. Go 15 mi. to Kenton, Delaware. At the traffic light, turn right on Rt 42 to Leipsic. From there go left on Rt 9 for 1.5 mi. to the entrance of the refuge. Meet at the Visitor Center parking lot.

Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park (10/31) 10708 Bristow Rd, Bristow, VA 20136. From I-95: Take Rt 234 north (exit 152B), travel 7.5 mi. and make a left onto Independent Hill Dr. Then make immediate right onto Rt 619 (Bristow Rd). Travel 7 mi. and turn left onto Iron Brigade Unit Ave. The parking lot is located on the 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 Rd). Travel 1.5 mi. and turn left onto Rt 619 (Bristow Rd). Travel 0.25 mi., turn right onto Iron Brigade Unit Ave and continue to parking lot. Meet in parking lot

Burke Lake Park (10/28) 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).

Dyke Marsh (8/30, 10/4, 11/1) 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 (9/9, 10/14) 3401 Prosperity Ave, Fairfax 22031 From I-495, take Rt 50 west one mi. to Prosperity Ave; turn left onto Prosperity and go one mi. to parking lot on left.

Fort C. F. Smith (9/30) 2411 24th St N, Arlington 22207 From I-66 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 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

Huntley Meadows Hike and Bike Trail

(9/5, 9/23) 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 (8/22) 3701 Lockheed Blvd, Alexandria 22306 From I-495, take Rt 1 south 3 mi. to Lockheed Blvd. Right on Lockheed, go 0.5 mi. to Harrison Ln, park entrance on left. Meet in parking lot.

Leesylvania State Park (9/12) 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.

Long Branch Nature Area (9/2, 10/7, 11/4) 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.

Lubber Run Park (9/16) 300 N Park Dr, Arlington, VA 22203 Take Rt 50, east from, Fairfax or west from Rosslyn to N Park Dr. Take the second exit on traffic circle to stay on N Park Dr and continue 0.4 mi. to Lubber Run Recreation Center on left. Meet at the Center parking lot.

Meadowood Recreation Area (10/24) 10406 Gunston Rd, Lorton, VA 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 mi. to Meadowood on right. (BLM, Lower Potomac Station Office). Park on right next to horse barns just before field station building.

Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge (9/26, 11/7) 13950 Dawson Beach Rd, Woodbridge 22192 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.

Potomac Overlook Regional Park (8/27) 2845 Marcey Rd, Arlington, VA 22207 From I-66 east take exit 72 and turn left onto Rt 29 south, and go 0.6 mi. taking a slight right onto Military Rd, continue 0.5

Book Notes

John M. Marzluff and Tony Angell erstwhile co-authors (*Gifts of the Crow: How Perception, Emotion and Thought Allow Smart Birds to Behave Like Humans*, 2012; *In the Company of Crows and Ravens*, 2005) have each come out with a new book.

- Marzluff's *Welcome to Suburbia: Sharing Our Neighborhood with Wrens, Robins, Woodpeckers and Other Wildlife*, 2014, reports the surprising news that many bird species are not only surviving but thriving in the suburbs of Seattle. For these, residential areas can provide better habitats than more rural habitat, Marzluff and his students document the kinds of changes that occur as habitat is altered and how different bird species adapt. Their findings result in recommendations about how to organize suburban development to protect and foster animal life, including birds, as well as humans
- Angell's *The House of Owls*, 2015, chronicles his experiences with the screech owls which have been nesting outside his bedroom window since his family moved to a Seattle suburb in 1969. He combines his skills as a naturalist and illustrator in this entertaining narrative of the antics of the creatures and their offspring over time. A nesting box, strategically placed outside his bedroom window, has allowed him to witness incidents like an irate female knocking her mate off its perch when he failed to heed the begging calls of their nesting chicks. There are 94 charming illustrations.

Laura Erickson and Marie Read co-authored:

Into the Nest, Intimate Views of the Courting, Parenting, and Family Lives of Familiar Birds, offers over 500 illustrated profiles of the nesting behavior of North American bird species. Laura Erickson who served as a science editor at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology until her move out of area and Marie Read who also was associated with Cornell as a photo/illustrations editor joined forces to provide a stunning photographic guide book.

— Carol and Chris White

mi. turning left to stay on Military Rd. Turn right after 0.3 mi. onto N. Marcey Rd and proceed 0.4 mi. to parking lot.

Riverbend Park (Nature Center) (8/29) 8814 Jeffery Rd, Great Falls, VA 22066 From I-495, take Rt 193 west 5 mi. to Rt 603 (Riverbend Rd). Right onto Rt 603, go 2 mi. to Jeffery Rd. Right onto Jeffery; go 1.5 mi. to Nature Center parking area. (Don't turn right at Main Park entrance sign)

Sky Meadows State Park (10/17) 11012 Edmonds Ln, Delaplane, VA 20144 From I-495, take I-66 west 42 mi. to exit for Rt 17 north (Delaplane/Paris). North on Rt 17 6.5 mi. to Rt 710. Turn left into park and proceed 1 mi. to Visitor Center parking lot. State fee area

Silver Lake Park (10/10) 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.

Virginia Society of Ornithology Chincoteague Weekend (9/11-13) For information, visit www.virginiabirds.net
Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival (10/9-11) For information visit www.esbirdingfestival.com



10% Birder Discount to NVBC members at Birdwatchers Seed and Supply Company.
Mention you are in the club at checkout.
Address: 396 Maple Avenue East (corner of Beulah Rd) in Vienna

Bird Walks at Local Parks

- **Dyke Marsh Sundays, 8 am** See directions. Visit the Friends of Dyke Marsh web site, www.fodm.org
- **Eakin Park Mondays, 7 am (March-Nov), 7:30 am (Dec-Feb)** Meet at parking lot. Leader: Carolyn Williams
- **Great Falls National Park Sundays 8 am** Meet at the Park Visitor Center parking lot.
- **Huntley Meadows Park Mondays 7 am (Mar-Oct) 8 am (Nov-Feb)** Meet in parking lot. Leader: Harry Glasgow



The World Series of Birding

On May 9 "The Interaptors" competed in the World Series of Birding in Cape May, New Jersey. The World Series of Birding is an annual competition in New Jersey with teams from as far away as Israel with a goal of raising funds for conservation efforts. Our team consisted of local park managers John Shafer (E.C. Lawrence Park), John Callow (Riverbend Park), David Farner (Fort C.F. Smith Park) and Rob Young (local guide and Riverbend Volunteer) and raised donations to support the Cape May Raptor Banding Project. (See photograph above) Our team participated in the Carbon Footprint Cup meaning we could only travel by bike and foot. We birded for almost 18 hours, covered close to 40 miles and tallied 96 species of birds. The weather was great for biking — mid-60's most of the day with light breezes. But for birding not so good. A heavy fog Friday night that persisted into Saturday morning combined with east winds kept the spring bird migration down and made the birds difficult to find. We did find some good birds though like the Chuck-will's-widows singing along New England Road at 4:30 am and the pair of Mississippi Kites flying high over Cape May Point.

—David Farner

Raven Loonatics 2015 Birdathon

The Raven Loonatics (Larry Meade, Bruce Hill and Gerco Hoogeweg) participated in the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy birdathon on May 3, 2015 to raise money and also see as many bird species as possible within Loudoun County in one day. Here is Gerco's report:

Our day started out with a quick trip to see a Woodcock. A woodcock is better described as a flying potato that peents. Well, all we got was the peent, but that was good enough. At Bles Park, one of our pre-dawn stops, a chorus of birds welcomed us. We quickly found tree swallows, robins and a prairie warbler. No owls.

Next up was Algonkian Park. Typically we get a lot of our birds here. We had a problem—fog on the river. Drat--how are we supposed to see all those ducks that help us boost our totals? Chasing shapes in the fog isn't helping much. With some effort, and the sun, we did manage to see all three Merganser species (Common, Red-breasted and Hooded). An Osprey was seen flying by and a group of gulls as well. We were happy about the latter, because often gulls are hard to find. Small birds such as the much anticipated warblers were

nowhere to be found! The predictions were for a moderate to heavy flight (Yes, even birders have weekly migratory forecasts). Guess it was departure flights, not arrival flights. With just over 60 species, we left for Bles Park. Bles Park was quiet too, but we found a nice Blue-winged Warbler.

The many Ashburn ponds are frequently good for ducks. Not so this time. In one pond we found a single female Ruddy Duck and a Double-crested Cormorant. It is unfortunate that by next year this particular pond will be surrounded by houses and access will be an issue. I am sure the ducks won't like this either.

The Van Metre wetlands boardwalk in Broadlands is a weird gem. Basically it is a storm water retention pond, but nature found a great use for this often muddy area with reeds, and there is a handy boardwalk for birders. A variety of shorebirds can be found here during migration. Today there was nothing too special in that bird category, but a few Soras were really cool. These small rails are hard to see, but easily called into action when mimicking the call of a rail.

A dirt road in the southern part of the county turned out to be our best place of the day. In short order we found many different warblers including: Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Black-and-White Warbler. We also found other good birds like Blue-headed Vireo, Wood Thrush, and Summer Tanager. The Summer Tanager was an unexpected bird. Wow, after this stop we were close to 100 species for the day and coated in dust that was kicked up by the various passing cars.

A greater part of the afternoon was spent chasing birds in the Lucketts area. Fortunately a Great-horned Owl was found. A nondescript bird by the name of Warbling Vireo was heard near the kayak launch at White's Ford Park. Next up were the Pine Siskins at Gerco's place. Throughout the day we received Siskin Status Reports so we knew the birds were present. One goal of the birdathon is to see as many species of birds as possible. Therefore, a quick stop for a single species is certainly not the weirdest thing to do.

A long drive to the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Studies is always on our itinerary. It takes roughly 35-40 minutes to get there. Our main goal was to find warblers such as Cerulean, Hooded and Louisiana Water Thrush. Blue-winged Warblers are typically on our target list as well, but since we saw one at Bles Park, we did not have to look for them. We did try to find a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, but were not successful in that endeavor.

Dulles Wetlands was quiet and we did not find many birds of interest there. The expected Virginia Rails were absent, no Bitterns were in and shorebirds were absent. We did see Great Egrets.

Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve yielded our two final species of the day. A Pine Warbler and Common Nighthawk were found near the entrance of the park.

As always it was great fun, and by 8:45pm we wrapped up for the day tallying 115 species. This was not bad considering that many migratory birds had not arrived yet.

—Gerco Hoogeweg



Photograph of Osprey by Gerco Hoogeweg

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JOIN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB

Northern Virginia Bird Club dues for 2015 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. Or join or renew online at the club's web site.

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 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, 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, send an email to nvabc@verizon.net. Put "EXCHANGE" in the subject field and

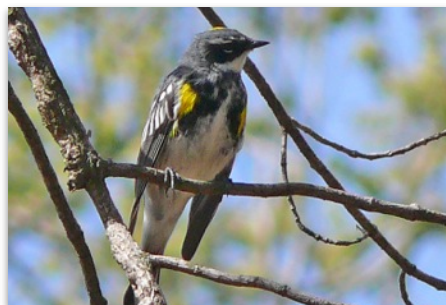
your full name in the message area. You will receive a response from nvbc-exchange@googlegroups.com. The list is for NVBC members' use only.

General Meeting Dates: September 23, November 18, 2015, February 17, and April 20, 2016.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, September 2, 2015, 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.

Thanks to the mailing crew: Many thanks to the May mail out crew: Elizabeth Fenton, Jane Grawe, Jean Tatalias and Joanna Taylor.

Deadline for next issue of *The Siskin*: The November issue will include activities through January 2016. Please send items for publication by **October 1, 2015** to the editors at siskineditor@verizon.net.



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Photo by Larry Meade of Yellow-rumped Warbler in Luria Park, Fairfax County