



The SISKIN

Newsletter of the Northern Virginia Bird Club

Vol. 60, No. 4

November 2015

www.nvabc.org

Inside

- Calendar of NVBC field trips, November-11, 2015 - February 7, 2016
- Chincoteague winter trip
- Highland County winter trip
- 2016 ASNV Winter Waterfowl Survey
- 2015 Treasurer's Report
- Upcoming Christmas Bird Counts in Northern Virginia
- Birding in Southeastern Arizona

Insert - 2016 membership renewal notice

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

Youth Birding Scholarship Opportunity

The Northern Virginia Bird Club is sponsoring the Val Kitchens Memorial Young Birder Scholarship for 2016. We are seeking applicants, 13 to 17 years of age, to receive a financial grant of up to \$500 to attend a Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) activity, a birding camp, a birding course or educational offering, or a similar activity. Applicants will be asked to submit a letter of application to the Board with a short biography (name, age, current involvement in birding if any), description of the planned activity and expressing why they would value this opportunity. Candidates will be asked to provide a reference from a member of NVBC, VSO, or from a birder familiar to the Club.

The deadline for submitting applications is March 13, 2016. Applications can be submitted as an attachment via email to the Club at

continued on p. 3

NVBC GENERAL MEETING—WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 8 PM

Urban Birds: Do Tree Species Matter? How Native and Exotic Plants Affect Food Resources for Backyard Birds

Speaker Desiree Narango



Photo by Beth Stewart

Although scientists have long recognized that the bird communities in urban areas are usually different from natural areas, surprising little research has been conducted to figure out why this occurs. Most urban ecology has focused on the remaining forest in or near urban areas even though suburban backyards also have the potential to provide suitable habitat for wildlife. Backyards have many different types of plants that may, or may not, be capable of providing important food items that promote local biodiversity.

Neighborhood Nestwatch is a program run by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center to study the effects of urbanization on birds. In 2013, the Nestwatch Food Web Project was initiated to investigate whether plants that are not native to the local ecosystem (i.e., exotic) support the same insect food resources for a common backyard bird: the Carolina Chickadee. In the summers of 2013 - 2015, the Food Web team with the help of over 150 volunteers, monitored backyard chickadee nest boxes in the Washington, DC area. Desiree will speak about some of the preliminary findings of this study as well as some of the ways you can participate in citizen science.

Desiree Narango is a Ph.D. student of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware and a Research Associate at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. Her research interests focus on understanding how animals respond and adapt to a rapidly changing world. She has over ten years of experience studying wildlife. She's also an active birder who really enjoys increasing her yard list and getting others excited about the natural world

Photo by Desiree Narango



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 4.

Presidential Peentings

We pursue our passion for birds in a variety of ways. Some are happy to watch the birds in their backyards or at their local parks. Others travel to build their bird lists or experience new adventures. Birders with especially high levels of commitment or perhaps what could more accurately be called obsession, sometimes embark on Big Years where they attempt to see as many birds as possible in a year. This could be at the county, state or national level. Some of the best known Big Years are those achieved in the ABA area which includes the US and Canada. Now a birder named Noah Strycker has accomplished what may be the greatest feat in birding. He is doing a world Big Year and has recently broken the record for the most bird species seen in one year with a count of 4,342. He is not stopping though. His goal is to get to 5,000 and he had 4,565 as of September 30. You can follow Noah's progress at his blog which is called "Birding Without Borders."

—Larry Meade



Green Heron with frog photographed by Larry Meade at Huntley Meadows

WINTER CHINCOTEAGUE TRIP

The Winter Chincoteague Weekend club trip is scheduled for February 5-7 (Friday to Sunday) co-led by Marc Ribaud and myself. February is an excellent time to visit Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel (CBBT) Islands. The Refuge is loaded with wintering waterfowl while the CBBT is famous for wintering sea ducks. On last year's trip, we saw a total of 97 species including 25 species of waterfowl. Highlight sightings were Ross's Goose and Horned Larks at Chincoteague NWR, Red Knots at the Chincoteague City mudflats, and American Bitterns near Mariner's Point. At the CBBT Islands, we found Common Eiders, Harlequin Ducks, Long-tailed Ducks, all three scoter species, Great Cormorants, Northern Gannets, Purple Sandpipers, Lesser Black-backed Gulls and best of all — a Razorbill.

Plans for the weekend include birding the Chincoteague area Friday afternoon starting at 3:15 pm. (optional) and Saturday starting at 7:30 am. Activities on Friday and Saturday include birding along Beach Road, Swan Cove and Tom's Cove and around the Wildlife Loop. Time and tides permitting, we will also visit the Queen Sound Flats, the Chincoteague City mudflats and Mariner's Point.

We will also arrange a trip to the CBBT Islands on Sunday, weather permitting. The CBBT trip requires security forms in advance and an extra fee (about \$10 per person). The trip concludes at noon on Sunday.

NVBC membership is required for this trip. To sign up for this trip, call or email Elton Morel at 703-553-4860 or eltonlmorel@verizon.net. The trip is limited to 24 people and usually fills up, so please contact Elton Morel first to ensure that space is available before making hotel reservations. When signing up, please indicate whether you are interested in Sunday morning's CBBT Island trip and a Saturday evening group dinner. If the trip is full, your name can be put on a waiting list.

We have obtained a special rate of \$75 per night 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 January 21 to get this special group rate. Participants should make your 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, February 6, with 24-hour notice

required for cancellation. Chincoteague NWR is a US fee area.

—Elton Morel

HIGHLAND COUNTY WINTER WEEKEND

Our winter trip to Highland County will be held on the weekend of March 4 - 6 (Friday to Sunday). We will spend Friday night in Staunton and Saturday night in Highland County. The trip limit is 16 people. A complete description of the trip will be in the February 2016 edition of the Siskin. Marv Rubin will lead the trip. To sign up, call Elton Morel at 703-553-4860 or email at eltonlmorel@verizon.net. NVBC membership is required.

—Elton Morel



NVBC birders at Chincoteague, NWR, February 2015 Photograph by Neal Gause

Youth Birding Scholarship Opportunity from p. 1

nvabc@verizon.net or mail to Northern Virginia Bird Club, Attn: Scholarship, P.O. Box 5812, Arlington, VA 22205-0812. Interested parties may contact Jean Tatalias at 703-281-6099 or David Farner at 443-643-6141, email the Club at nvabc@verizon.net or contact other Officers and Directors listed at the Club Contacts list on the last page of the newsletter.

Examples of potential activities include (but are by no means limited to):

American Birding Association Summer Youth Camps:

Information on the ABA Young Birder Events should be posted soon on the 2016 Camp Colorado and 2016 Camp Avocet. <http://events.aba.org/>

Audubon's Hog Island Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens

Designed for ages 14-17, this intensive 6-day, 5-night program on Hog Island allows enthusiastic young birders to work with some of the country's best-known birders and ornithologists on field identification, bird ecology and conservation. <http://hogisland.audubon.org/bird-studies-teens>

Cornell Lab or Ornithology's Home Study Course in Bird Biology

Learn about bird behavior, migration, ecology, conservation, and many other subjects—in your own home, at your own pace! This fun course was written at an introductory college level and includes all basic ornithology topics. It is suitable, however, for anyone with an inquiring mind and a serious interest in birds. http://store.birds.cornell.edu/Home_Study_Course_in_Bird_Biology_s/44.htm

Club members, please spread the word and help a young birder learn about this scholarship!

—Jean Tatalias



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

Audubon Society of Northern Virginia Winter Waterfowl Survey

On **Saturday, February 6 and Sunday, February 7**, birders of all skill levels will join up to count waterfowl in Fairfax, Arlington, and Prince William counties, including the Potomac and Occoquan watersheds. Novice birders will be paired with expert bird enthusiasts. Larry Cartwright continues as the volunteer compiler for this year's count. For more information and to join the team, email info@audubonva.org or call 703-438-6008

Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2015

The Club has almost 360 family and individual memberships, with close to 500 members

Income received

Dues for 2015	\$3,806
Bird Watcher's Digest & pins	373
Donations	<u>682</u>
Total Income	\$4,861

Expenses

Organizational costs (includes fees for PO box, bulk mailing, web site hosting, state registration, VSO dues, etc.)	\$748
Meeting expenses (hall rental, speaker honorariums, etc.)	1,023
Siskin printing and postage	1,984
Donations made by Club	<u>100</u>
Total expenses	\$3,855

Net for 2015 \$1,006

We entered 2015 projecting a slight deficit. The Club was fortunate in receiving higher revenues than expected. NVBC received donations of over \$400 from generous members to whom we are very grateful. We also received \$277 from the warblers class taught by Larry Meade in co-sponsorship with the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia.

On the expense side, we were very close to projected amounts. The one exception is that we did not award a youth scholarship in 2015 due to process timing issues. The Board hopes to resume the scholarship award in 2016.

The result of these items was a surplus of \$1,006.

Jean Tatalias, Treasurer

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Saturday, December 19, 2015

WASHINGTON D.C.

Includes area of Virginia inside the Beltway along with Dyke Marsh. To participate, email compiler, Larry Cartwright: prowarbler@verizon.net or contact the Audubon Naturalist Society through Carol Hayes at carol.hayes@anshome.org or call 301-652-9188 extension 10.

Sunday, December 20, 2015

MANASSAS-BULL RUN

To participate, contact Audubon Society of Northern Virginia by registering at their web site: <http://audubonva.org/index.php/conservation-a-counts/christmas.bird-count>.

SENECA MD/VA

Count has five Virginia sectors, ranging from Great Falls Park to the eastern corner of Loudoun County. To participate, email compiler Jim Nelson at kingfishers2@verizon.net.

THE PLAINS/AIRLIE

To participate, email compilers, Todd Day at blkvulture@aol.com or Perri Rothemich at prothemich@gmail.com.

Sunday, December 27, 2015

NOKESVILLE

For more information or to register, contact Kim Hosen at 703-499-4954 or khosen@pwconserve.org.

Tuesday, December 29, 2015

CENTRAL LOUDOUN

Sign up at www.loudounwildlife.org or contact compiler, Joe Coleman: 540-554-2542 or joecoleman@rstartmail.com.

Saturday, January 2, 2016

CALMES NECK

Parts of western Loudoun and eastern Clarke counties. The cutoff date to join up to participate is December 21. Contact compiler, Margaret Wester at margaretwester@hotmail.com

Sunday, January 3, 2016

FORT BELVOIR

Contact compiler, Kurt Gaskill at kurtcapt87@verizon.net or 703-768-2172.

SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN

Lucketts Sector is in northern Loudoun County. To participate contact sector leader, Gerco Hoogeweg: at drgerco@hotmail.com

WALKERTON

Count area is primarily in Middle Peninsula. Contact by December 21. Contact compiler, Fred Atwood at fredatwood@yahoo.com.

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 on page 5.
- 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>November</u>			11 8:30 AM Eakin Park Elizabeth Fenton Catherine Kubo			14 9 AM Blandy Farm David Ledwith Elton Morel
			18 8:30 AM Bles Park Jean Tatalias NVBC Meeting 8 PM			21 8 AM Silver Lake RP Larry Meade Phil Silas
						28 8 AM Aquia Landing David Ledwith Elton Morel
<u>December</u>			2 9:30 AM Long Branch Larry Cartwright			5 8 AM Huntley Meadows Larry Meade Dixie Sommers
			9 8:30 AM Dyke Marsh Phil Silas			12 8 AM Mason Neck SP Larry Cartwright David Ledwith
December 14, 2015 - January 5, 2016— CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA (See p. 3)						

DIRECTIONS

NVBC Meeting (11/18) 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 (11/28) 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 the parking lot.

Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia (11/14) 400 Blandy Farm Ln, Boyce, 22620 Take I-66 west to Rt 17 north (Exit 23, Delaplane/Paris). Follow Rt 17 north to junction with Rt 50 west. Turn left at traffic light onto Rt 50/17; go 7.8 mi., turn left onto Rt 750 to the Arboretum.

Bles Park (11/18) 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. Meet at parking lot.

Burke Lake Park (1/13) 7315 Ox Rd, Fairfax Station 22039 From I-495, take exit 54 west (Braddock Rd). If coming from the north, stay in right lane of exit. Go 1.5 mi. on Braddock Rd then 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 (12/9) 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 (11/11) 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.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>January</u>			6 9:30 AM Long Branch Elizabeth Fenton			9 8 AM Northern Neck X-trip <i>Members only/</i> <i>Reservations required</i> Larry Meade
			13 8:30 AM Burke Lake Catherine Kubo			16 8 AM Riverbend-Visitor Ctr Gerco Hoogeweg David Ledwith
			20 8:30 AM Huntley Meadows Catherine Kubo			23 8:30 AM Leesylvania SP Marc Ribaudo Phil Silas
			27			30 8 AM Occoquan Bay NWR David Ledwith Marc Ribaudo
<u>February</u>			3 9:30 AM Long Branch Elizabeth Fenton		5-7 Chincoteague Weekend <i>Members only/Reservations required</i> Elton Morel Marc Ribaudo	

Huntley Meadows Park (12/5, 1/20) 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 (1/23) 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 turnaround circle at fishing pier. State fee area.

Long Branch Nature Area (12/2, 1/6, 2/3) 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 (12/12) 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.

Northern Neck X-trip (1/9) *Meet at the Silver Diner, 6592 Springfield Mall.* From the Beltway, take I-95 south to exit 169A (Springfield/Franconia) (Rt 644E). From exit ramp, turn right onto Franconia Rd E. Stay in the right lane. Go about 0.3 mi. on Franconia Rd E, past Loisdale Rd, and turn right into Springfield Mall. Go about 325 ft; turn left and go about 150 ft; then turn left again and go another 200 ft to the Silver Diner on the left.

Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge (1/30) 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.

Riverbend Park (Visitor Center) (1/16) 8700 Potomac Hills St, 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 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 (11/21) 16198 Silver Lake Rd, Haymarket 20169 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 and continue to parking lot next to the lake. Meet in parking lot.

Trip Leaders

Larry Cartwright	703-941-3142
Elizabeth Fenton	703-533-0851
Gerco Hoogeweg	540-822-5857
Catherine Kubo	703-352-1238
David Ledwith	703-933-9477
Larry Meade	703-206-9030
Elton Morel	703-553-4860
Marc Ribaudo	703-680-1134
Phil Silas	703-590-7286
Dixie Sommers	703-969-7931
Jean Tatalias	571-447-7977

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

BIRDING SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA



Why go birding in Arizona?

Richard Cachor Taylor in his *ABA's A Birder's Guide to Southeastern Arizona* (ABA/Lane Birdfinding Guide, 2005), asserts that, "Southeastern Arizona is one of the most exciting regions for birding in North America. More than 400 species occur here annually, and 514 species have been recorded. That is more kinds of birds than any other land-bounded area of comparable size in the United States." The varied geography provides the habitats to support the species diversity as you travel from the deserts, canyons to the forested mountains, i.e., the Sky Islands.

There are many ways to go birding in Southeastern Arizona: on your own using birding guide books, arranging for a personal birding guide, signing up for a trip with a birding company such as WINGS, VENT, or Borderland Tours, and participating in birding festivals. We signed up for the Tucson Bird and Wildlife Festival in part because Tucson has a variety of things to do including visiting museums and galleries and good restaurants.

The Tucson Audubon Society sponsors the Tucson Bird and Wildlife Festival held this year August 12 – 16. It takes advantage of the summer monsoon season sometimes called the "second spring" with the rains bringing increased plant growth, insect activity and bird activity. The month of August finds the peak of hummingbird diversity.

The festival includes half- and full-day field trips led by expert birders, several who live in Arizona and all have birded extensively there. Trip leaders included Rick Taylor (yes, the author of the ABA birder's guide and *Birds of Southeastern Arizona*) and Laurens Halsey (birding guide and wildlife photographer and regional eBird reviewer) and others with impressive backgrounds and knowledge.

The organizers want to optimize the birding experience so the number of field trip participants were limited to about 16 birders in two vans.

Bridled Titmouse photograph by Larry Meade



*Photographs by Neal Gause: Above: Sulfur-bellied Flycatchers
Below: Canyon Wren and Broad-billed-Hummingbird*



The start time for field trips ranged from 5 to 5:30 am which can be daunting until you factor in the time difference between Arizona and Virginia. Those of us coming from the East Coast benefited from the three-hour time difference so it was much easier not to miss the van departure time! The early start is important in August since daytime temperatures heat up quickly although it remained much cooler in the mountains. August is the monsoon season so we came prepared with rain gear but aside from a stormy night, there wasn't any rain during our field trips. Visitors without any experience with the monsoons and flash flooding need to be careful to consult with locals in the event of rain.

With little experience birding in the West, we saw life birds every day. Our first stop on the field trip to the Huachuca Mountains was at a grassland area at the south entrance of the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. Our first lifer for the day was the Chihuahuan Raven flying by and later great binocular and scope views of Botteri's Sparrows. Everyone enjoyed the flocks of Lark Buntings flying across, landing in scrubby trees and grasses and flying away. At the next stop at Carr Canyon lower road we walked and scanned along the roadside and saw Black-throated Gray Warblers, Bridled Titmouse, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Anna's Hummingbirds. There were more life birds at the next stop: Olive Warbler, Grace's Warbler, Painted Redstart, Yellow-eyed Junco, Acorn Woodpecker, and Buff-breasted Flycatcher. We had our sandwiches at the picnic area near the Ramsey Vista where we had great looks at Zone-tailed Hawk. As a side note, the vans carry jugged water to refill personal water bottles and full-day trips have sandwiches, snacks, and soft drinks for lunch. We ended the birding stops at the Ash Canyon B&B that is famous for its hummingbirds. Hummingbirds that came to the feeders included Anna's, Black-chinned, Broad-billed, Lucifer (male and female), Hybrid Lucifer and Costa's, and Magnificent.

On Saturday, we joined the Borderland Specialties trip led by Rick Taylor and John Yerger. On the outward bound trip, we saw a group of Pronghorns. At the Sonoita rest area, we saw Say's Phoebe, Cassin's and Western Kingbirds perching along the fences. We continued on to various stops along Harshaw Canyon. We had great views of a Pacific-Slope, Gray and three Sulfur-bellied Flycatchers; Acorn and Arizona Woodpeckers; Hutton's Vireo; adult and spotted immature Eastern and Western Bluebirds; and many other birds. We also got a good view of the Elegant Trogon.



Elegant Trogon photographed by Larry Meade

On Sunday's field trip to Montosa Canyon, the leaders slowed the vans so that we could see Cliff Swallows and their nests under a highway overpass. At our first stop, we saw in the shrubs and small trees next to the road Lucy's Warbler and Rufous-

winged Sparrows. Our next stop along Mt Hopkins Road netted everyone great views of Cassin's Sparrows singing and skylarking. At the rest stop we saw the target bird, the Varied Bunting. At various walking stops along the side of the road we saw Canyon and Rock Wrens and a Greater Road Runner. At the end of the trip, at the Amado Water Treatment Plant, we saw two Long-billed Curlews, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Neotropic Cormorant, Northern Rough-winged, Barn and Cliff Swallows and Mallards.

On our own we visited several birding hotspots: the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Mt. Lemmon (rest stops, Rose Canyon Lake and Campground, and Summerhaven), Sweetwater Wetlands, and the Santa Rita Lodge in Madera Canyon.

In July 2006, Larry Meade took a nine day trip to Arizona with WINGS. The leaders were Jon Dunn and Gavin Biever. Since all lodging and food was included in the price of the tour, he did not have to worry about logistics. He could focus all his effort on birding and taking photos. Some of his favorite birds of the 190 that he saw included Spotted Owls, an Elegant Trogon, a Flame-colored Tanager, a Rufous-capped Warbler, young Northern Goshawks, and fourteen kinds of hummingbirds.

The birds and wonderful scenery make a trip to Southeastern Arizona very worthwhile!

—Neal and Pat Gause

*Landscape photographs by Larry Meade:
Chiricahua Mountains below and Catalina State Park on right*



First American Birding Expo

On October 4, 2015, I had the opportunity to attend the first American Birding Expo in Columbus, Ohio. This event was organized by Bird Watcher's Digest and the American Birding Association. This 3-day event was held at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center located along the Ohio River. People from over 40 different countries participated in the event.

The expo was held in the Center and two large outdoor tents. The amount of information offered on birding tours around the world was overwhelming. Central and South American countries were well represented including a few surprises such as Guyana which appears to offer great birdlife with a fraction of the tourists found in nearby Costa Rica. After a few hours browsing and talking to all these vendors I was overwhelmed by all the options and choices. It was fun to talk to all the representatives. Many had flown in for the expo since the majority of their clients come from the US.

Of course significant time was spent comparing the various optics vendors including Zeiss, Leica, Kowa and others. The clarity and quality of optics that are offered at each price point is amazing. I was particularly impressed by the extremely small 10x25 Kowa binoculars. These tiny binoculars are suitable for those who want to travel extremely light or have small hands. Naturally the extreme high-end binoculars were tested too. It is hard to see the differences between the various brands, but I thought that the Zeiss HT was the brightest of all, but the Leica 10x42 felt great to hold in the hand. Overall it was just fun to test and compare all these brands.

There were plenty of odds and ends: T-shirts, art, books, seeds, feeders, other optics, carrying cases and a shoulder brace for cameras and spotting scopes. Plenty of testing of the shoulder brace was done and it shows a lot of promise for use in the field.

Of course I did some birding as well. I saw first-of-the-season Dark-eyed Juncos, a Blue-Headed Vireo, as well as a nice variety of warblers including Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Northern Parula, and Black-throated Green. Also watched a juvenile Pileated Woodpecker and a pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. I had fun attending and recommend this event.

—Gerco Hoogeweg



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

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**DATED
MATERIAL**

JOIN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB

Northern Virginia Bird Club dues for 2016 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.

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: November 18, 2015, February 17, and April 20, 2016.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, December 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 August mail out crew: Elizabeth Fenton, Catherine Kubo, Joanna Taylor, and Jean Tatalias.

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



CLUB CONTACTS

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*Eastern Kingbirds at Bombay Hook
Photo by Larry Meade*