



The SISKIN

Newsletter of the Northern Virginia Bird Club

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August 2020

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

NVBC GENERAL MEETING—THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 8 PM

Birding Four Corners of the Lower 48

Speaker: Larry Meade

The United States contains a rich variety of biomes and habitats. For a traveler interested in nature, this means that one can find in many regions of the country a different mix of plants, birds, insects and animals. Larry Meade has traveled to each corner of the contiguous United States in search of birds and other fascinating experiences. He will share photos and stories from his trips to Maine, South Florida (two trips), Washington state, and San Diego County, California.

Larry Meade is the president of the Northern Virginia Bird Club and a former board member of the Virginia Society of Ornithology. He serves as sector leader for several Christmas Bird Counts and is an avid nature photographer. He often leads nature walks for the Club and other groups in our area and teaches workshops for the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia.

*Photographs by Larry Meade:
Burrowing Owl at the Salton Sea,
California (right);; Heerman's Gulls at
Port Angeles, Washington (top left);
Atlantic Puffin at Bar Harbor, Maine,
Magnificent Frigatebird, Dry Tortugas,*



The September virtual meeting will be held using Zoom, which many of our members have used these last few months. If you are not familiar with Zoom you can visit this link for a brief introduction on doing a Zoom meeting: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-How-Do-I-Join-A-Meeting>.

Each Zoom meeting has a unique number. The direct link to the meeting will be: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8533842096?pwd=dUpXY20xbmYyYjQxMUprVjdVQWjkUT09>. If you start from the Zoom application, you can use the Meeting ID: 8533842096, Password: 528266. This information will be sent to the Club exchange email list (see *Siskin* back page on how to join) and will be in this *Siskin* that is posted on our website. If you join the Zoom meeting early, you can chat with others. During the speaker's presentation, please mute your device and turn off your video to reduce the noise and help the communication speed. There will be time afterwards to speak again and ask questions.

Presidential Peentings

The Covid 19 pandemic and the resulting quarantine have turned almost everyone's life upside down. We have had to make adjustments to our lives both minor and major. Some of us are working from home and we are taking precautions when we leave our homes. As birders, we have also had to adjust. All Northern Virginia Bird Club walks and trips have been canceled since the middle of March. We are planning to resume local walks in September, but that is obviously subject to change. I have noticed that birding has been in the news lately. I think some people had not been outside as often pre-pandemic and are just now noticing how beautiful and interesting birds can be. Maybe some of them will maintain their interest in birds and become full-

fledged birders after things get more normal. Many of us who were already birders have been getting out and doing "lone wolf" birding or have been birding in a small group. I have been exploring some new places in an effort to avoid crowds. Taking it slow and watching birds going about their business can be very rewarding. In this issue of The Siskin, some NVBC members have shared some stories and photos related to their birding experiences in the pandemic. I think that we are lucky to have this hobby that gives us a reason to get out of the house and that also keeps our minds engaged as we explore nature.



*Baby Orchard Oriole at Neabsco Boardwalk
photographed by Larry Meade*

—Larry Meade

Val Kitchens Education Grants for 2020

Thanks to donations from our members, the Bird Club has provided two grants through the Val Kitchens Education Grant for 2020. As in the past two years NVBC has awarded \$500 to Community Cloud Forest Conservation (CCFC) in Guatemala and this year \$150 to Mercedes Alpizar and her Niños y Aves (Children and Birds) program in Costa Rica. Both programs help support conservation efforts through providing environmental education for students.

Our grant to CCFC continues to support their "Kids and Birds" program. Currently, CCFC has a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) to plant agro-forest parcels in villages that border the cloud forest within Important Bird Areas (IBAs). The heirloom crops and fruit trees in these parcels provide vital nutrition for Q'eqchi' Maya families in remote villages, while also providing habitat for birds, especially migratory birds. The agro-forest parcels are the core of the current project with US Fish and Wildlife. Through its donations, the Northern

Virginia Bird Club is already a de facto partner in this project. Our donation last year was an important step in helping them meet the required \$3 to \$1 match to receive USFW funds.

The *Niños y Aves* (Children and Birds) program promotes environmental awareness for children in Turrialba, Costa Rica. Many local residents in Turrialba hunt birds and capture them for the cage trade. These activities have been practiced for generations and have had a negative impact on bird populations. *Niños y Aves* focuses on helping children at the primary school level to learn why conserving birds is more important for the environment and the economy of Costa Rica than hunting and caging them. By reaching students at an early age, Mercedes Alpizar Hernández, the program's director, hopes that the children will develop a new attitude about the importance of birds and will influence the practices of people involved in destructive activities. The donation from the Northern Virginia Bird Club, which was matched by NVBC member, Bill Young, is being used to purchase binoculars, field guides, transportation, food, and printed materials for the children of Turrialba.

—David Farner



Green Heron at Huntley Meadows Park photographed by Neal Gause



Eastern Bluebird at Clark's Crossing Park photographed by Larry Meade

Spring Birding during the 2020 Pandemic

Many Club birders reported wonderful experiences simply “backyard” birding and others ventured further afield

The Magic Tree

Working from our Falls Church home has given my husband and birding companion, Dan, an exciting spring treat. From out of his home office window he can view the boughs of a mature oak that hangs over the next-door neighbor’s roof. He quickly learned that keeping his binoculars and camera handy was a must. Within a few days during the beginning of May that tree, which we call The Magic Tree, attracted a nice variety of migratory warblers that may have gone unnoticed had Dan not been working from home. I would be working in the basement in my studio when I would hear an excited shout. I rushed upstairs to find Dan excitedly observing the Magic Tree from his home office window. Grabbing my binoculars, I joined him in observing the feathery show of migratory birds gleaning insects from the oak boughs festooned with “oak worms.” We saw during that wonderful early May: Red-eyed Vireo, Bay-breasted Warbler, female Scarlet Tanager, Cape May Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and even a Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

—**Dan and Beth Fedorko**



Bay-breasted Warbler photographed by Dan Fedorko

Birding at Algonkian Park

Many local good birding areas were closed, but my friend, Candi Crichton and I birded often at Algonkian Park which was closed to vehicles, but walk-ins were allowed. As of Monday, May 18, I had seen



*Above photographs:
Northern Parula and Scarlet Tanager
photographed by Seth Honig at home in
Fairfax, Virginia (in part attracted to his
artificial stream)*

*Prairie Warbler photographed by Tom
Thaller at Merrimac Farm WMA*

*Below Wilson’s Warbler photographed by
Evan Pannkuk at Occoquan Bay NWR*



only 11 warblers. But it turned out to be a banner day for me. After a slow morning of birding, we were heading back to the cars when I thought I saw a female scarlet tanager. We continued a little way further then I spotted a brilliant male scarlet tanager, closer to us, out in the open, among the white flowers of a locust tree. It was feeding there and we got a great, unobstructed view. Then close by it, another equally brilliant male scarlet tanager started feeding. We had 2 spectacular males visible in one binocular view. The females appeared nearby so there was no squabbling between the males. The 2 couples stayed, feeding around the white flowers for easy contrast for a long time. Several times we could see the 2 males in the same view! I don’t ever recall such magnificent views of scarlet tanagers, which I have seen annually for about 25 years. It was thrilling to see. Finally the foursome flew off and we continued to our cars

—**Maria Kelly**

Out There

I heard Chincoteague hotels were opening on May 15, the day we were supposed to be on the Island. I immediately called the Best Western, and decided that having the hotel rooms empty for the last two months was probably the safest time to go, so I did. \ What a rush. \ Led Zeppelin was on the radio for all of May on XM, so I just hit the road and didn’t change the station.

Gerry Shannon decided to get “Out There” also, and while birding at Tom’s Cove on the first day, Toby Hardwick and Bob Butterworth pulled up behind my car. We had blue skies, nice breeze and birds everywhere.

I had 18 checklists, 91 species, one life bird, valiant searches for two rare birds and the Chuck-will’s-widow flew slowly by right in front of me, before darkness, so no mosquito bites.

No longer felt “dazed and confused,” getting “out there” on the Eastern Shore solved the problem.

—**Joan Mashburn**

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 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/updated-field-trips/>.
- 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
<u>September</u>			2 8:30 AM Long Branch David Ledwith			5 8 AM Shenandoah River Campus at Cool Springs Battlefield Elton Morel Phil Silas
6 7:15 PM Swift/Nighthawk Watch Joanna Taylor <u>Call leader for meeting place and directions</u>			9 8:30 AM Dyke Marsh David Ledwith			12 7:30 AM Conway Robinson State Forest Toby Hardwick Larry Meade
			16 8:30 AM Algonkian RP Elton Morel Dave Boltz	17 NVBC Meeting 8 PM		19 7:30 AM Leesylvania SP Phil Silas Ken Hunt
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Trip Leaders <div> <div>Jeremy Beck</div> <div>703-517-1816</div> </div> <div> <div>Dave Boltz</div> <div>703-599-8305</div> </div> <div> <div>Larry Cartwright</div> <div>703-941-3142</div> </div> <div> <div>Toby Hardwick</div> <div>703-201-1517</div> </div> <div> <div>Ken Hunt</div> <div>319-354-1079</div> </div> <div> <div>David Ledwith</div> <div>703-933-9477</div> </div> <div> <div>Larry Meade</div> <div>571-275-2523</div> </div> <div> <div>Elton Morel</div> <div>703-907-9951</div> </div> <div> <div>Tom Nardone</div> <div>703-946-7738</div> </div> <div> <div>Phil Silas</div> <div>703-987-0817</div> </div> <div> <div>Joanna Taylor</div> <div>703-243-5989</div> </div> </div>			23 8:30 AM Fort C F Smith Jeremy Beck			26 7:30 AM Ocoquan Bay NWR Ken Hunt Larry Meade
			30 8:30 AM Cub Run Stream Valley Park Elton Morel	<u>October</u>		3 8 AM Aquia Landing Beach Park Elton Morel David Ledwith
			7 8:30 AM Long Branch Tom Nardone			10 8 AM Leopold's Preserve Elton Morel Toby Hardwick
			14 8:30 AM Potomac Overlook RP David Ledwith			17 8 AM Bristoe Station Battlefield Park Toby Hardwick Larry Meade
			21 8:30 AM Meadowood Recreation Area Larry Cartwright			24 8:15 AM Sky Meadows SP Elton Morel David Ledwith

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>October</u>		27 8:30 AM Laurel Hill Equestrian Center Phil Silas				31 8 AM Silver Lake RP Toby Hardwick Larry Meade
<u>November</u>			4 8:30 AM Long Branch Tom Nardone			

DIRECTIONS
NVBC Meeting (9/17) Online meeting using Zoom platform.

Algonkian Regional Park (9/16)
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 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.

Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park (10/17) 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.

Conway Robinson State Forest (9/12) 12816 Lee Hwy, Gainesville 20155
From I-495, take I-66 west 27.6 mi. to exit 43B, US-29 North in Gainesville. Continue on US-29 for .4 mi, turn left into access road to parking area. There is a small parking area adjacent Route 29-S which can accommodate approximately 10 cars. Additional parking is permitted along the entrance/exit road unless it restricts through traffic.

Cub Run Stream Valley Park (9/30)
From the junction of I-66 and I-495, follow I-66 W to US 29 S in Centreville. Take exit 52 from I-66 W. Turn right onto US 29 S, go 1.5 mi. and turn right onto Pleasant Valley Rd (State Rt 609), go 0.9 mi. and turn right onto Bluebridge View Dr, go 0.3 mi. and turn right onto Hidden Canyon Rd, go 0.3 mi. and turn left onto Stillfield Pl, go 0.3 mi to 15077 Stillfield Pl on the left. Park in the neighborhood side streets nearest the front of 15077 Stillfield Pl. Meet at the entrance to the park to the left of the house at 15077. Avoid any parking that blocks driveways. There are several spots along the trail that could be under water. If there have been recent rains, recommend wearing mud boots or waterproof shoes.

Dyke Marsh (9/9) 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.

Fort C F Smith (9/23) 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.

Laurel Hill Equestrian Center (10/27) 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 (9/19) 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.

Leopold's Preserve (10/10) 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



Yellow-crowned Night-herons on nest and young observed at various stages and photographed by Seth Honig in Falls Church



Trip Directions *from page 5*

hand (east) Parking lot can be used for overflow parking.

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.

Meadowood Recreation Area (10/21) 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 miles 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) 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 (10/14) 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 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.

Shenandoah River Campus at Cool Springs Battlefield (9/5) From I-495, take VA-267 West (Dulles Toll Road) to Leesburg for 36.8 mi. Take exit 1A and merge onto US-15 South/VA-7 West/Leesburg Bypass for 3.3 mi. Continue straight to stay on VA7 West for 17.1 mi. After passing Snicker's Gap but just before the Shenandoah River Bridge, turn right at Parker Lane (F709) then go 1.4 mi. to the parking lot. To avoid the toll, from I-495 take VA-7 West (Leesburg Pike) to Leesburg for 47.2 mi. After passing Snicker's Gap but just before the Shenandoah River Bridge, turn right at Parker Lane, then go 1.4 mi. to the parking lot.

Silver Lake Park (10/31) 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 mi. to Rt 55. Turn right onto Rt 55 and go 0.9 miles 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.

Sky Meadows State Park (10/24) 11012 Edmonds Ln, Delaplane 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.

Bird Walks at Local Parks

- **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 front of snack/concession stand at the Park Visitor Center.
- **Huntley Meadows Park, Mondays, 7 am (Apr-Oct) 8 am (Nov-Mar)** Meet in parking lot. Leader: Harry Glasgow
- **Merrimac Farm, last Sunday, 8 am** Meet at Merrimac Farm Stone House. www.pwconserve.org/eventsindex.html#birds



Birding in Hawaii

orange-red Hawai'i 'Akepa and the iconic long-billed I'iwi along the "best mile of Hawaiian birding" followed by the Palila, a dry-forest specialist.

The Hawaiian honeycreepers are a great example of adaptive

radiation. Current thinking is that a species of cardueline finch populated the islands, evolving into over 50 species adapted to various niches, with various bill shapes to match. For example, the 'Akiapola'au uses its stiff lower beak to drill into trees in search of grubs and larvae, which it then noodles out with its long, flexible upper beak. We got to watch this bird forage—fantastic!

We saw nesting Laysan Albatross and water birds such as Hawaiian Coot and the Hawaiian Goose or Nene. We managed to get all three species of Francolin, often spotted dashing along the upland roadsides. There were colorful introduced birds like the Red Junglefowl, the Kalij Pheasant, and the Yellow-billed Cardinal. We saw wintering Bristle-thighed Curlew (easier to find than when breeding in Alaska!).

Birding in Hawai'i is a sobering as well as a wonderful experience. Fewer than half of their honeycreepers are extant today. Probably the top threats are habitat loss, avian malaria, and predation by non-native mammals. Various efforts to combat the losses are underway, including habitat protection and restoration and captive breeding programs. But progress is slow, and populations continue to decline.

Our Wings tour guides did an excellent job with the itinerary, and

they were diligent about helping everyone get good looks at the birds. And they were fonts of knowledge not only about birds and birding, but also about local conservation issues and general Hawai'i natural history. In all, it was a trip to remember. And we considered ourselves very fortunate to have made the trip and to get home in the first week of March before travel began to be difficult.

—Catherine Kubo
Jean Tatalias

Last year when we were considering possible 2020 destinations, we independently came up with the idea of a winter trip to Hawai'i. It seems pretty obvious, right?—a tempting array of endemics and exotics that you can't see anywhere else in the United States, plus a two-week respite from winter. Hence the end of February found us in Honolulu. We spent a pleasant day in the capital touring the sights and ticking off various species that frequent the downtown parks, including introduced birds such as the Red-crested Cardinal and the Warbling White-eye, and natives like the gorgeous White Tern, which is the city of Honolulu's official bird. The next day we met up with our two guides from Wings and eight other participants for the start of a ten-day tour covering three islands and a variety of habitats, from urban parks to sea watches to native forests, wet and dry.

In all, we saw 97 species of birds, 14 of them endemic to the islands. We watched Red-tailed Tropicbirds sail in the stiff winds around Kiluea Point Light House on Kaua'i. We hiked muddy forest trails in the rain forest, also on Kaua'i, where we had beautiful, bright red 'Apapanes and several other endemic honeycreepers. Big Island birding brought more endemics, including the beautiful



Matt Van Wallene photographed the 'Apapane (top) and the 'Akiapola'au (above) Gray Francolin (below left), Catherine and other birders (middle), and Laysan Albatross chick (below right)



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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 website at <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: September 17, 2020 and November (tbd) 2020, February (tbd) and April (tbd) 2021.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, September 3, 2020, 7:30 pm, at Diane Marton's home or Zoom meeting. 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 dsgm42@gmail.com.

Thanks to the mailing crew: Many thanks to the April mail out crew: Elizabeth Fenton, Joanna Taylor

Deadline for next issue of *The Siskin*: The November issue will include activities through January

2021. Please send items for publication by **October 1, 2020** to the editors at siskineditor@verizon.net.

CLUB CONTACTS

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NVBC email: lgmeade@gmail.com

Birding during the 2020 Pandemic (continued)

From our backyard to the Shenandoah State Park

The baby Cardinal (right) is one of six species that have raised young right in front of us at our home this spring. We've been lucky to watch a Robin raise two broods in the same nest over a gutter downspout; a Mourning Dove doing a double brood in her same nest on a tree branch; our annual show of Bluebirds and House Wrens in the nest boxes; and a noisy nest of Red-Tailed Hawks high above our next-door neighbor's house. We have never had this many species raising young this close to our house before. We've been more active around our house during this pandemic spring than usual, so it's not because of reduced human presence. It seems incredibly fortuitous.

The stretching Turkey was an incredibly cooperative bird we met at Claude Moore Park in Loudoun County. You know how Wild Turkeys usually disappear into the grass, bushes, or woods, when they detect a person even one to two hundred yards away, right? This bird was next to the parking lot and actually walked towards us for a few yards, before ambling off to the side to stretch. Maybe the birds are practicing social closeness for the pandemic.

When the State Parks opened up, we quickly made a reservation to camp at Shenandoah River State Park, which is a lovely park for birding. We watched a pair of Brown Thrashers sunning with their heads



turned and feathers open. This behavior was discussed recently on the VA-Bird listserv. The consensus supported by an article at Audubon's web site and by a biologist here in Virginia is that birds do this to mitigate parasites in their feathers; and possibly to warm up.

—Steve Johnson

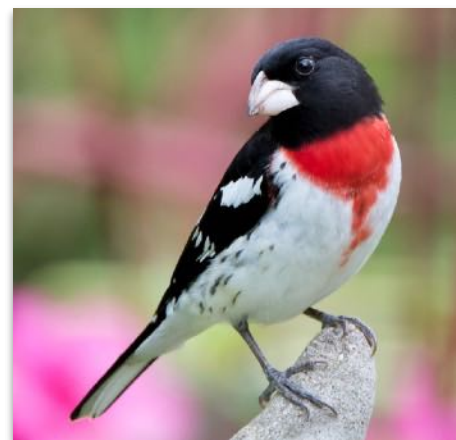
Photographs by Lynn Rafferty



Local Spring Migration

Every May since 2008 (except once when a mean boss made me work), I have gone to northwest Ohio for spring migration -- even before the Biggest Week festival started. But the Ohio hotspots were closed this year, and I experienced migration locally. When I was in Ohio in years past, I always wondered what I was missing here, and this year I found out. I think I learned a lot about the patterns of migration in our area, including the arrival of our breeding birds. The high point for me was a complete surprise, however. On Friday, May 22, I decided that the forecast didn't look good for migration overnight and that I'd take a break from dawn birding. Around 7 am the next day I opened my back door for ventilation, and I realized I was hearing a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. I got my binoculars, and the tree in my neighbor's yard had the most amazing spectacle! The tree was FULL of migrants. There must have been at least 25 warblers, as well as an Eastern Peewee and a Red-eyed Vireo. Most of the warblers were Blackpolls and Bay-breasted, but there were also some Black-throated Greens, American Redstarts, Magnolias, and Northern Parulas, as well as at least one stunning Blackburnian. I watched for about 45 minutes until the spectacle tapered off and my need for coffee took precedence. I'm still planning to go to Ohio next May, but staying home certainly has its rewards!

—Marta Wagner



Rose-breasted Grosbeak photographed by Beth Fedorko



Photographs

Left column: photos by Tom Thaller - Red-eyed Vireo in neighborhood; Prothonotary Warbler and Blackpoll Warbler at Occoquan Bay NWR

Middle column: Photo by Evan Pannkuk - White-rumped Sandpiper at Colvin Ln Pond, Prince William County; Photos by Seth Honig - King Rail at Occoquan Bay NWR and Killdeer chick busily finding food at Mooreview Parkway Impoundments, Loudoun

Right column: Seth Honig photographed at home: Blue-winged Warbler, Summer Tanager, Ovenbird.

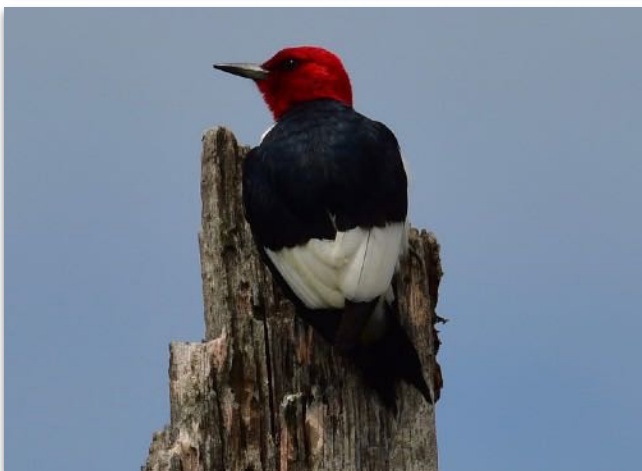


Bluebirds mating photographed on the Accotink Creek Trail in Fairfax City by Seth Honig



Prothonotary Warbler feeding young (left) and taking flight (above) at Occoquan NWR photographed by Seth Honig

Northern Mockingbird feeding its young. (photos on the right) Photographed on the Fairfax City portion of the Accotink Creek Trail by Seth Honig.



Great Blue Heron and Red-headed Woodpecker photographed at Huntley Meadows Park by Neal Gause

