



The SISKIN

Newsletter of the Northern Virginia Bird Club

Vol. 66, No. 1

February 2021

www.nvabc.org

Inside

- Calendar of NVBC field trips, March 31 - May 8, 2021
- Reports on Christmas Bird Counts
- Birding and Photography: My Personal Experience

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

A reminder to pay your 2021 dues

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

April NVBC Meeting

Mark April 15 on your calendar for the NVBC spring meeting. The program will appear in the next issue of *The Siskin*. Dr. Sarah Karpanty will be speaking on colonial waterbird conservation in the Hampton Roads

Election of Officers

Also on the agenda is the election of club officers and directors for two-year terms that begin July 1. If you are interested in serving on the NVBC Board or have suggestions to make to the Nominating Committee, please send an email to nvbcskinseditor@gmail.com by April 5, 2021. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates at the meeting. The by-laws allow for nominations from the floor but given the constraints of a virtual meeting, submission via email deadline would be appreciated.

NVBC GENERAL MEETING—Thursday, FEBRUARY 18, 8 PM

Bird Survival Adaptations in the Himalaya

Speaker: Dr. Sahas Barve

Birds that live at high elevations have to deal with two major environmental challenges: the cold and the lack of oxygen. Dr. Barve will talk about how Himalayan birds have adjusted to cope with both these pressures during his virtual presentation.

Dr. Barve is an avian evolutionary ecologist and currently a Peter Buck Fellow at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. He grew up in Mumbai, India and was always outside watching birds. He is an avid birder and hopes to see 6,000 bird species by the time he is 60. Dr. Barve has a beautiful image of the Trishul massif (about 23,500 feet) in the Himalaya of northern India on his homepage. You can learn more about his other avian research at sahasbarve.com.

The February virtual meeting will be held using Zoom starting as early as 7:30 pm with the featured speaker at 8 pm. Please register in advance by clicking on the registration link found at the upper right at the Northern Virginia Bird Club website (nvabc.org). Upon registering, an email automatically will be sent with a link to click on to join the meeting. There will be ample time to take questions from the audience.

The photo is from Chopta, Uttarakhand, India, one of Dr. Barve's field sites. The mountain on the top right corner is the peak of Chaukhamba, which is 23,518 feet in elevation. This is higher than any mountain in the Western Hemisphere. Photograph by Pratik Joshi



Presidential Peenting

Well, we made it through 2020. It was a year of disruptions and tragedy which none of us will ever forget. We all changed our routines and missed out on events in order to keep ourselves and others healthy and safe. At the Northern Virginia Bird Club, we made the decision to cancel our out-of-town trips and also our local bird walks when the virus was spiking in our region. If all goes as planned, we will be resuming our walks this spring.

Fortunately, birding is also a hobby which we can do alone or in small groups. Christmas Bird Counts were still held this year, albeit a bit toned down and with smaller groups. Birds don't know about the pandemic and, to the delight of many birders, some interesting rarities have been showing up in our area. The Ruff in Loudoun County, the Rufous Hummingbird in Annandale, and the Barnacle Goose in Washington DC are just a few

of the exciting birds that many of us had a chance to see in 2020. It's also fun to run into birding friends where these birds are being seen. Birders tend to "flock" to them. The communication systems related to finding rare birds are becoming so sophisticated these days, that anyone who wants to keep on top of where rare birds are showing up can easily do so.

Let's hope that at some time in 2021 things are more or less back to normal. I look forward to going on more NVBC trips and bird walks. Finding and studying birds is rewarding, but the social aspect of birding together adds immeasurably to the enjoyment of birding. Organized walks also provide the best opportunity to teach and inspire new birders. Good birding in 2021!

—Larry Meade



Barred Owl photographed by Larry Meade

Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) During the Pandemic

Four Christmas Bird Count Birds

In four days of birding while participating in four Christmas Bird Counts this year, I saw many of our local wintering bird species. They were all the best birds that they could be, but for each count there was one bird in particular that made a special impression on me. You might call each one "the bird of the day."

My first count was the DC count in the Virginia portion of the circle. After returning from leading a small group down the GW Parkway, I found Ed Eder's group at the entrance road to the marina at Dyke Marsh. We were comparing our sightings for the day, when suddenly a beautiful Peregrine Falcon came in low from the direction of the river. The falcon soared directly over our heads, briefly perched in a nearby tree and then took off again. It was a short, but sweet sighting!

The next day Elton Morel and I surveyed Silver Lake and North Fork Wetlands for the Plains count. We birded the fields, crossed the little creek and scanned the pasture on the far side of the park. As we started to enter the wooded area next to the small pond, I looked to my right and saw a puffed up Barred Owl looking me right in the eye. It was at eye level and only about twenty feet away. I alerted Elton to the owl in a loud whisper and we both snapped multiple photos. The bird did not seem bothered by us in the slightest and we quietly walked on to find more birds.

The next week was the Nokesville CBC. After birding other parts of the circle in the morning, Elton, Toby

CBC from a Less Experienced Birder's Perspective

There are 11 regional Christmas Bird Count circles that are either all or partly in Northern Virginia. Each circle has a Compiler for 6-10 Sectors, with a leader for each sector and 70-150 counters. An enormous amount of volunteer time is spent organizing these counts which, this winter, took place between December 15, 2020 and January 3, 2021. As just a counter, I personally have 125 emails, numerous texts, and phone calls. I was sent color-coded maps of the Sector, of each walking/driving path, full maps of the Circle, Rare Bird Documentation forms, Eagle Sighting Logs, repeated COVID-19 protocols, and sponsor waiver forms to fill out online. The emails cover introductions to team, directions to meeting spot, missing birds, discussions about eagle sightings to make sure we do not double count, and how to park on the side of a busy road. While birding I kept car mileage start and stop times to each location, walking mileage per area, walking time per area, and eBird checklists for various locations. Internet service can be iffy and phone batteries die.

How to go on a Christmas Bird Count is a real mystery for us less experienced birders and in this pandemic year it was plain daunting. I started birding in March 2019 and met Larry Cartwright on my regular Sunday walks at Dyke Marsh. He asked me to come along on the Dyke Marsh count. Last year beginners were encouraged to come along and participate, kids were given tally counters, and I kept

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Continued on p. 3

Christmas Bird Counts During the Pandemic

Four CBC Birds *from p 2*

Hardwick and I birded the Prince William Landfill. There were plenty of gulls and Bald Eagles around the trash and on the soccer field. We had permission to cover also the perimeter road in separate cars. As we were driving, Toby and I realized that Elton had lagged behind us, so we went back to find him figuring that he was on a good bird. Little did we realize that it was a Rough-legged Hawk! The hawk soared around briefly and perched in a tree before two Red-tailed Hawks swooped in and chased it off.

My final CBC was the Belvoir count where I covered Occoquan Regional Park. I climbed a steep hill to bird the White Trail which parallels the river and the entrance road. There is a large stand of pines there and I went searching for birds that like that habitat and I found Golden-crowned Kinglets and a Pine Warbler. My favorite bird, though, was a Brown Creeper which flitted around just downslope from me and favored me with some nice views and photo opportunities.

The Christmas Bird Count is one of my favorite events of the birding year. Experienced and new birders all join together as a community to provide important data for the National Audubon Society. Unfortunately, because of Covid-19, we were not able to get together in person for tally rallies to share a meal and regale each other with our sightings. However, it was nice to see people at virtual rallies.

—Larry Meade



Brown Creeper photographed by Larry Meade

Manassas-Bull Run Christmas Bird Count, December 20, 2020

The Manassas-Bull Run (M-BR) CBC was conducted December 20 with about 90 counters from the group of 137 participants last year. Covid protocols were strictly adhered to, and the preliminary species count is 86 which is as many as last year. Highlights included over 600 American Pipits and a very late Blue-headed Vireo.

—Phil Silas

Red-shouldered Hawk photographed by Gerco Hoogeweg the day before the count in the Sector.

Seneca Maryland/Virginia Christmas Bird Count, December 20, 2020

We had decent weather this year, and many veteran participants came out and did a very thorough job of counting, even with the additional restrictions imposed by the pandemic. We had additional feeder counters this year due to increased interest in backyard birds. Our count circle covers parts of Fairfax and Loudoun counties in VA (and part of Montgomery County in MD). Based on preliminary reports, our counters identified 105 species on count day, which is a very high number for this count.

We have initial reports of many unusual birds found in the count circle (each still subject to appropriate documentation, review, and approval): Ross's Goose, Cackling Goose, American Woodcock, Ring-necked Pheasant, Sandhill Crane, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Snow Bunting, Evening Grosbeak, Common Redpoll, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Pine Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler. We also have count week Lapland Longspur. Thanks to everyone who came out to help this year under very daunting circumstances.

—Jim Nelson

Sugarloaf Mountain - Sector 14 Lucketts, January 3, 2021

Gray, rainy and cold was the day but surprisingly we still managed to find 51 species, excluding 3 count week birds I saw the day before. Sector 14 of the Sugarloaf Mountain Count (Maryland) is a small sliver just east of Lucketts and has a nice variety of habitats. The sector is usually good for raptors, but the numbers were down this year. The biggest surprise was that we did not see any Bald Eagles. However, we saw 2 Barred Owl, 6 Common Ravens, 5 Pileated Woodpeckers, and a total of 19 Eastern Meadowlarks. Best spot of the day was the fishing pier at the Potomac Wood Girl Scout Camp where we found Golden-crowned Kinglet, Brown Creeper, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and a Great Blue Heron who startled us when it flew up a with a loud squawk from the creek we were walking along.

—Gerco Hoogeweg



Upcoming Trips and Events

Compiled by Elton Morel

Note:

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																			
<u>March</u>			31 8:30 AM Laurel Hill Equestrian Center Phil Silas	<u>April</u>		3 8 AM Aquia Landing Beach Park Elton Morel																			
<table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="2">Trip Leaders</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Jeremy Beck</td> <td>703-517-1816</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Larry Cartwright</td> <td>703-941-3142</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kurt Gaskill</td> <td>703-768-2172</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Toby Hardwick</td> <td>703-201-1517</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ken Hunt</td> <td>319-354-1079</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Larry Meade</td> <td>571-275-2523</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elton Morel</td> <td>703-907-9951</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tom Nardone</td> <td>703-946-7738</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phil Silas</td> <td>703-987-0817</td> </tr> </table>		Trip Leaders		Jeremy Beck	703-517-1816	Larry Cartwright	703-941-3142	Kurt Gaskill	703-768-2172	Toby Hardwick	703-201-1517	Ken Hunt	319-354-1079	Larry Meade	571-275-2523	Elton Morel	703-907-9951	Tom Nardone	703-946-7738	Phil Silas	703-987-0817		7 8:30 AM Long Branch Tom Nardone		10 7:30 AM Leopold's Preserve Kurt Gaskill Toby Hardwick
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			14 8:30 AM Burke Lake Phil Silas	15 NVBC Meeting 8 PM		17 8:30 AM Occoquan Bay NWR Phil Silas Larry Cartwright																			
			21 8:30 AM Meadowood Recreation Area Larry Cartwright			24 7:30 AM Huntley Meadows Hike/Bike Trail Ken Hunt Larry Meade																			
			28 8:30 AM Fort C. F. Smith Tom Nardone Jeremy Beck			<u>May 1</u> 7:30 AM Leesylvania SP Phil Silas Ken Hunt																			
			5 8:30 AM Long Branch Elton Morel			8 7:30 AM Trillium Trail Elton Morel Ken Hunt																			

DIRECTIONS

Virtual NVBC Meeting (4/15)
Online meeting using Zoom platform.

Aquia Landing Beach Park (4/3)
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 parking lot.

Burke Lake Park (4/14) 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).

Fort C.F. Smith (4/28) 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

Directions

on left. Meet in parking lot at east end of park. From Alexandria: take GW Pkwy north, take left exit onto Spout Run, then right exit onto Lorcom Ln, and follow remaining directions above.

Huntley Meadows Hike and Bike Trail (4/24) 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).

Laurel Hill Equestrian Center (3/31) Lorton From I-495, take I-95 south about 13 mi. to exit 163 (Lorton Rd). Continue 1.4 mi. west on Rt 642/Lorton Rd, then turn left on Rt 611/Furnace Rd then an immediate right onto Dairy Rd. Proceed to and meet in the parking lot.

Leesylvania State Park (5/1) 2001 Daniel K Ludwig Dr, Woodbridge 22191 From I-495, take I-95 south about 14 mi. to exit 156 (Dale City/Rippon Landing/Rt 784). Following the posted highway signs for Leesylvania State Park, exit east on Rt 784. Proceed eastward 1.1 mi. to Rt 1. Turn right (south) on Rt 1 and go 0.9 mi. to Neabsco Rd. Immediately past the Wawa service station, turn left (east) on Neabsco Rd and proceed 2 mi. to park entrance on right. After passing through the park entrance gate, go 2.2 mi. to end of paved road and park in "Picnic Area" parking lot, immediately before turn-around circle at fishing pier. State fee area.

Leopold's Preserve (4/10) 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 hand (east) parking lot can be used for overflow parking.

Long Branch Nature Area (4/7, 5/5) 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 (4/21)

10406 Gunston Rd, Lorton 22079 From I-495, take I-95 south 7 mi. to Lorton exit. Left on Rt 642. Immediately after passing under railroad tracks (0.25 mi.) turn right on Lorton Market Rd, which soon becomes Gunston Cove Rd. After crossing Rt 1, road becomes Gunston Rd. Go 1.8 miles to Meadowood on right. (BLM, Lower Potomac Station Office). Park on right next to horse barns just before field station building.

Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge (4/17) 13950 Dawson Beach Rd, Woodbridge 22191 From I-495, take I-95 south 9 mi. to (left) exit 161 (Woodbridge). Go south on Rt 1 about 2 mi. to left turn onto Dawson Beach Rd. Continue on Dawson Beach 0.7 mi. to entrance gate. Meet in parking lot. US fee area.

Trillium Trail-G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area (5/8) (Fauquier Co) From I-495, take I-66 west 51 mi. to Linden exit (Rt 79). Go left (south) from exit ramp on Rt 79 approx. 1000 ft. to Rt 55. Turn left (east) onto Rt 55; go 1.2 mi. to Rt 638 (Freezeland Rd). Turn left (north) onto Rt 638. Follow Rt 638, as it bears right, 5.3 mi. to Trillium Trail Parking Area on right—look for sign on kiosk. (Parking Area is just before radio towers.) **Note:** participant must have an **access permit** issued by VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, www.dgif.virginia.gov, 1-866-721-6911.

Spring Chincoteague Trip cancelled



Evening Grosbeaks at Shenandoah University river Campus at Cool Spring Battlefield, Clarke County, Virginia photographed by Dave Boltz

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 the main parking lot, closest to the Park Visitor Center.
- **Huntley Meadows Park, Mondays, 7 am (Apr-Sep) 8 am (Oct-Mar)** Meet in parking lot. Leader: Harry Glasgow
- **Merrimac Farm, last Sunday, 8 am** Meet at Merrimac Farm Stone House. www.pwconserve.org/events/index.html#birds



CBC from a Less Experienced Birder's Perspective from p. 2

count with pen strokes on a paper with clipboard in pouring rain and no plastic cover for the tally sheet. This year, I emailed six of the eleven compilers listed in the Siskin November issue. Larry Cartwright responded right away and encouraged me to go on two counts. Eventually with much persistence and follow up, I was included in other counts and participated in a total of five.

Typically, the Sector team assembles in a parking lot, then 4 to 5 groups of 2 to 5 birders are assigned different paths and we all walk through a hotspot and thoroughly count all the birds seen or heard. After 3 to 4 hours, we gather to share species lists and send them off to the Sector leader to prepare reports for the Compiler. No lunch is needed, as it is a half day of birding. No maps needed, as we all know the hotspot.

Walking paths included paved walks near a marsh, parking lots edges in office complex, icy bridges, thick meadows with no path at all. We tunneled through blackberry and raspberry bushes, dodged low branches, jumped over water, stepped over logs, and tried to keep quiet so as not to flush the ducks too soon. Some of the locations looked like movie sets, like the barn area of Oatlands Plantation, others have water views that go on for miles, and most sites are plain beautiful.

A fun count day involves the “dash in your car” to the next location, camera, and bins, around your neck, with seatbelt properly placed to pull your bins up, to find a place to park, hop out and list and look for birds. Walkie-talkies may be involved. On the backroads you can slow down the car as a Sharp-shinned Hawk flies by your windshield and open the rooftop window as the Common Raven circles above.

I find it interesting that the counters are not always regular birders. They may have just been doing CBCs for a few years, or birded years ago. Or even better, they may have just emailed a compiler and said they want to get started and they get assigned a Sector! Experience is not required for everyone on a team.

We are all so lucky to be “out there” counting birds.

For more information on the history of CBC, go to <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>.

—Joan Mashburn



Rufous Hummingbird photographed by Dave Boltz at Green Spring Gardens Park, Fairfax, Virginia, November 18, 2012

Pine Siskins in Fairfax

Pine Siskin feeding on a bush in a residential yard in central Fairfax County on October 27, 2020. Notice the pointed beak, the deeply forked tail, and the yellow on some of the wing and tail feathers. Photograph: © Donald Sweig.



Pine Siskin on a thistle feeder Fairfax County, October 27, 2020. This bird has significant yellow feathering. Photograph: © Donald Sweig.



Pine Siskins on thistle feeder, Fairfax County, October 27, 2020. Photograph © Donald Sweig



When I began serious birding, over 30 years ago, I decided to photograph the birds that I was seeing, as both a personal record and to show friends what I had seen. So, I bought a used semi-pro Nikon, manual-focus, film camera and a zoom lens. I soon found out that what others told me was true, that it is very difficult to bird seriously and photograph at the same time.

Many birds, especially songbirds, are small and they move around a lot. Even larger birds, like raptors are often hard to find and photograph in the sky. But I persevered and ended up taking a lot of bad, and a few good photos.

After a few years I upgraded to a Canon professional autofocus film camera, with a 300 mm telephoto lens which made photographing birds easier, although I still had to deal with the trouble and expense of buying, hauling around, and developing film. Finally, I upgraded to a Canon semi-pro digital single-lens reflex (SLR) autofocus camera, which made it very much easier indeed. For the last several years I have been using a Canon 7D SLR camera body with a Canon 100 to 400 zoom lens. It seems to work fairly well for most of my bird photography. But it is still a large, heavy camera that is difficult to haul around. Other birders often use smaller, lighter, cameras that seemed to work well for them, especially for taking reference/record documentary photos. I have considered getting a smaller and lighter camera for myself. Ultimately, whatever camera one uses it's just a matter of getting used to it and learning to use it so that you get the results that you want.

Although I don't travel much for birding anymore, I have birded and hauled my equipment around to over 22 states. I have taken many thousands of color slide transparency and color negative photo images and I have over 100 gigs of digital photo images of birds. Many of the images that I have taken, probably like most photographers, were pretty much worthless (out-of-focus or improper exposure). But I have taken some truly nice photo images of our avian friends. I have enjoyed sharing

Birding and Photography:

My Personal Experience



many of those images with my friends and have used some of them to illustrate nature articles that I have written for publication. But as I have slowed down with the physical and sometimes medical issues that come with age, being able to look at the photo images that I took over many years and in many places is a great consolation and source of joy. So many memories:

- Great Gray Owls and Northern Hawk Owls photographed in freezing Minnesota;
- Altamira Orioles and Green Jays in Texas;
- White-headed Woodpeckers, Violet-green Swallows, Golden Eagles, and so much more in Eastern Oregon;
- Trogans, Ferruginous Hawks, Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcons, hummingbirds, and more in Arizona;

- Painted Buntings, Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, and more in South Carolina;
- And the many wonderful birds, including Snowy Owls, Mississippi and Swallow-tailed Kites, fascinating nesting Baltimore Orioles, migrating warblers, huge kettles of migrating Broad-winged Hawks and even a Painted Bunting seen and photographed in Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware.

Looking back at some of my photos reminds me of the wonderful times that I've had. It's a personal decision whether or not to get a camera to take with you when you go birding and if so what kind of a camera you want to get, but overall I'm glad that I did and that I still do bird photography.

—Donald Sweig

Author and photographer

*Swallow-tailed Kite, Loudoun County, Virginia, August 2018
(photograph above) photographed by Donald Sweig*

*Snowy Owl, Gravelly Point, National Airport, January 2014,
photographed by Donald Sweig*



*Hooded Warbler, Monticello Park, Alexandria, Virginia, April 2017
photographed by Donald Sweig*



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JOIN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB

Northern Virginia Bird Club dues for 2021 are \$10 for Individual and \$15 for Family Membership. Members receive our quarterly newsletter, *The Siskin*. Checks for dues should be sent to Northern Virginia Bird Club, Attn: Membership, P.O. Box 5812, Arlington, VA 22205-0812. Or join or renew online at the club's web site, <http://www.nvabc.org/join/>.

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

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

NVBC ON THE WEB

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

please email the webmaster, Jeremy Beck at jghyll+nvabc@gmail.com.

NVBC eMail Exchange

By participating in the club's email exchange, you can get email notices of late updates to *The Siskin* and the field trip schedule. To join the exchange, send an email to lgmeade@gmail.com. Put "EXCHANGE" in the subject field and your full name in the message area. You will receive a response from nvbc-exchange@googlegroups.com. The list is for NVBC members' use only.

General Meeting Dates: February 18, April 15, September (tbd), and November (tbd), 2021.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, March 4, 2021, 7:30 pm. To join the Zoom board meeting or to have items put on the agenda, please email lgmeade@gmail.com.

Thanks to the mailing crew: Many thanks to the November mail out crew: Elizabeth Fenton and Joanna Taylor.

Deadline for next issue of *The Siskin*: The April issue will include activities through June 2021. Please send items for publication by **March 15, 2021** to the editors at nvbcsiskineditor@gmail.com. (please note change in email address)

CLUB CONTACTS

President: Larry Meade, 571-275-2523
Vice President, Programs: Phil Silas, 703-987-0817

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

Secretary: Diane Marton, 703-527-7360

Treasurer: Jean Tatalias, 703-281-6099

Directors: Jeremy Beck, 703-517-1816
Joan Mashburn, 703-209-8678

Directors Emeritus: Len Alfredson, Charlotte Friend, Don Wiesnet

Membership: Elizabeth Fenton, 703-533-0851

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

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

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

NVBC email: lgmeade@mail.com

Birding and Photography: *My Personal Experience* by Donald Sweig (continued)



Above right photograph of Short-eared Owl in flight, Clarke County, Virginia, January 2017



Long-eared Owl, Clarke County, Virginia, January 2017



Red-morph, Eastern Screech-owl, Great Falls National Park, Virginia, January 2018



Male Painted Bunting, Prince George's County, Maryland, July 2015



© Donald M. Sweig



Above left, Male Baltimore Oriole, feeding chicks, Great Falls, Maryland, June 2016

Above right, Two, mated, Eastern Screech-owls, Dyke Marsh, Virginia, March 2015



© 2017 Donald M. Sweig

Left, Adult Mississippi Kite bringing food to two fledged chicks, Fairfax County, Virginia, July 2016

Below, Snow Geese, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Dorchester County, Maryland, January 2018



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