



The SISKIN

Newsletter of the Northern Virginia Bird Club

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April 2022

www.nvabc.org

Inside

- Calendar of NVBC field trips April 13 - June 18, 2022
- Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve - Accokeek Loop Trail
- 2022 Winter Chincoteague trip report
- February Birding in Nicaragua

Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge Bird Banding 2021

The bird banding station at Occoquan Bay NWR is once again welcoming visitors this spring on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 7 am to 11:30 am. We are located near the gazebo on Deephole Point Road overlooking Marumsco Creek. Due to current Fish and Wildlife regulations, only two visitors at a time are permitted and masks must be worn. If these regulations change, I will post on the club exchange and put a notice on the website. The station will not be open if the weather is too cold, below 50°F, or too windy, over 15 to 20 mph. We close the Sunday before Memorial Day.

2021 was the twentieth year of operation for the station. We banded 417 birds of 51 species – lower than usual due to being open only three days a week instead of four. We banded our first Blackburnian Warbler on May 12, 2021 bringing our species total to 103.

—Joanna Taylor

NVBC GENERAL MEETING—THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 8 PM

The Intelligence of Birds

Speaker: William Young

How intelligent are birds? And how should avian intelligence be measured? During the past 20 years, scientists have discovered that birds are capable of much more complex thought processes than previously believed. Bill Young will examine many aspects of bird intelligence, including problem solving, memory, artistic talent, and the ability to be devious.

Bill, who has made many previous presentations at NVBC meetings, is a writer who lives in Arlington. He now spends much of his time teaching Zoom classes. His 2022 presentations include a course about birds and language, workshops on how to identify warblers and waterfowl, and programs about the role of birds and nature in the cultures of both East Asia and Latin America. He is the co-creator (with Ashley Bradford) of the

MPNature.com website, which contains a wealth of information about natural history in Virginia and beyond. His book *The Fascination of Birds: From the Albatross to the Yellowthroat* examines birds in the contexts of science, history, language, culture, and other areas. He also makes nature videos, and his YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/williamyoung42>) has had more than 850,000 views.



Crested Owl in Costa Rica photographed by William Young

The April 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.

Presidential Peentings

Sometimes we joke during our bird walks that as we are making a list of birds that we see, maybe the birds are making a list of birders that they see. What kinds of birders might be on a list that our avian friends might be keeping? For example, there are field trip leaders who can often be identified by their spotting scopes and by their use of their phone while making an eBird list. This species is usually in front of the group and tends to be more vocal than the other birders. Beginning birders might be observed. They can sometimes be identified by their wide eyes as they see a bird that is new to them. Photographers have become more common recently. Their large lens cameras are a field mark which makes the ID for them relatively straightforward. They may or may not have binoculars. Sometimes, listers are seen out in the field. They are after a rare bird that has been recently seen in the area and can be identified by their intense focus as they obsessively scan the bushes. Generalists might be another species encountered. They will certainly look at the birds, but they will also study the insects and plants found along the way. No matter which species of birder you identify with, we look forward to having you join us on one of our NVBC bird walks this spring. Maybe the birds will be watching us as much as we are watching them!

—Larry Meade

Photographs by passerby using Donna Quinn's phone (top) and Neal Gause (middle and bottom)

Top: Raven Loonatics on birdathon

Middle: NVBC Trillium Trail birders led by Elton Morel

Bottom: Photographers/birders at Magee Marsh Boardwalk



Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve – Accokeek Loop Trail

Trip to new site scheduled for May 28, 2022

Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve (CNNAP), located in Stafford County, became the Commonwealth's 54th Natural Area Preserve in 2008 (April 2020 Siskin article, "Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve"). The diverse plant communities protected within the preserve provide habitat for a variety of bird species, including approximately 70 species thought to breed on the property and numerous over-wintering waterfowl. Spring is a wonderful time to visit and enjoy the birds within the Preserve. As is often the case, birding can be quite productive in the parking lot. Summer Tanagers often breed near the lot as do Yellow-throated Vireos and Black-and-white Warblers. As you walk through the mountain laurel at the start of the trail, you are likely to hear Hooded Warblers as well as Ovenbirds and Wood Thrushes—two of the more frequently heard breeding birds at Crow's Nest. Worm-eating Warblers sing frequently from the steep slopes along the trail. The bottomland forest along Accokeek Creek provides excellent habitat for Prothonotary Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrushes and American Redstarts. Kentucky Warblers also breed in this area. The trail continues along the shoreline of Accokeek Creek where you can encounter Eastern Kingbirds as well as

Orchard and Baltimore Orioles. Red-eyed Vireos, Eastern Wood-Pewees and Acadian Flycatchers are all common along the trail. The trail, with the extension down to the birding pond, is approximately 3.5 miles in length. For tree lovers, there are many old age trees located along the trail, including nice specimens of Tulip Polar, Black Gum, American Beech, and a variety of oak and hickory species. Elevation ranges from approximately 170 feet near the parking lot to near sea level along Accokeek Creek. The uphill portions of the trail are relatively gentle with grades generally less than 10 percent.

—Michael Lott

Note: The walk is scheduled during the Memorial Day weekend which could lead to increased demand for parking spaces. The CNNAP contact requested NVBC birders consider carpooling. Carpoolers could meet at the Virginia Railway Express station parking lot (station address 1712 Brooke Road) that is located five minutes from the preserve. The walk meeting point is the CNNAP Raven Road entrance.

Chincoteague Winter Trip

After a one-year hiatus due to the COVID pandemic, the Northern Virginia Bird club returned to Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel (CBBT) for the club's winter weekend on February 11 to February 13. The group managed to collectively tally 85 species for the weekend – a bit on the low side due to low densities of waterfowl species and limited access to key areas on the refuge.

Our Friday afternoon birding was marred by high winds keeping the bird activity low. On our drive around the Wildlife Loop, we encountered remarkably low numbers of waterfowl, but we did find our first Tricolored Heron, albeit seen in bad light, and a flyby of a Northern Harrier. As was the case in 2020, access to the beach was restricted to just the north parking lot while the south parking lot was completely closed. At the beach, the wind was even stronger, but we did manage to find a Black-bellied Plover on the mudflat in Swan Cove.

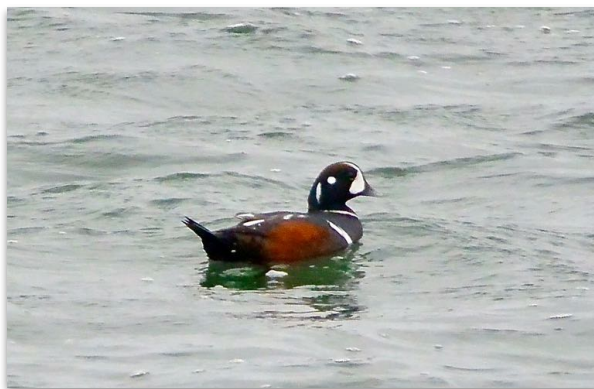
Saturday morning's activities started on the board walk near the hotel. Just as some of us were gathering to start our morning, a flock of about 60 White Ibises rose from the marsh, flew over the McDonald's, and disappeared past the Refuge Inn. It was a wonderful sight for those who had gathered early. The entire group did manage to see a few other White Ibis once we were on the boardwalk, but they were distant and hard to see as they were tucked into the estuary at low tide. We did not find any of the rarer 'marsh' sparrows nor a rail, but we had excellent looks at American Oystercatchers, Greater Yellowlegs, Willets, and Dunlins on the oyster beds plus a nice flock of handsome Red-breasted Mergansers. The morning's return visit to the refuge produced a flock of about 35 Marbled Godwits distantly seen in Tom's Cove, wonderful views of a Tricolored Heron and Snowy Egret along the roadside canal near Black Duck Marsh, a couple of Red-throated Loons offshore and a flyover of just two Snow Geese – the only Snow Geese we saw on the refuge. A short walk around the Visitor's Center parking lot produced a Gray Catbird and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Saturday afternoon activities started with a visit to the Chincoteague Island School Ponds which held another Tricolored Heron while a visit to the Queens Sound Boat Ramp produced a Peregrine Falcon perched on the corner of a duck blind. A late afternoon return visit to the refuge was much more productive than the previous afternoon. We found a Marbled Godwit and a Black-bellied Plover mixed in with a flock of Willets in Swan Cove, spotted a Northern Gannet flying high off the beach and finally found Brown-headed Nuthatches for the group at the Wildlife Loop entrance parking lot.

At Kiptopeke State Park on Sunday morning, several Common Loons and a male Common Goldeneye were seen close off the pier while a Peregrine Falcon made multiple passes hunting the pigeons over the concrete ship breakwater; it finally caught a pigeon and proceeded to dine on it.

We spent an hour and a half on CBBT Island #4 on Sunday morning in what turned out to be much better conditions than we thought it would be given the previous weather forecasts. We immediately found the usual gathering of Great Cormorants on the bridge abutments, Purple Sandpipers on the rocks, Harbor Seals just off the rocks and hundreds of Northern Gannets streaming by. Thanks to Toby Hardwick's sharp eyes, our most notable find was a beautiful male Harlequin Duck followed by good looks at multiple spiffy-looking Long-tailed Ducks and close looks at two Great Cormorants swimming in the water. As we ended the visit to the island, we had distant looks at up to 26 Razorbills, the largest skein being sixteen individuals.

—Elton Morel



Photographs by Seth Honig:

Header photograph of White Ibises flying

Brown-headed Nuthatch

Harlequin Duck viewed from CBBT Island #4

(Note: additional trip photographs in online addendum and Tricolored Heron, Snowy Egret and Great Egret standing in row on page 6)

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/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>April</u>			13 8:30 AM Meadowood Recreation Area Tom Nardone			16 7:30 AM Occoquan Bay NWR Larry Meade Ken Hunt
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Trip Leaders Jeremy Beck 703-517-1816 Toby Hardwick 703-201-1517 Bert Harris 615-440-0666 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 Dixie Sommers 703-969-7931 </div>			20 8:30AM Fort C. F. Smith Jeremy Beck Tom Nardone	21 NVBC Meeting 8 PM		23 7:30 AM Clifton Institute Bert Harris Elton Morel
			27 8:30 AM Potomac Overlook RP Jeremy Beck			30 7:30 AM Leesylvania SP Phil Silas Ken Hunt
			<u>May 4</u> 8:30 AM Long Branch Elton Morel Dixie Sommers			7 7:30 AM Trillium Trail Elton Morel Ken Hunt
			11 8:30 AM Fort C. F. Smith Jeremy Beck			14 7:30 AM Conway-Robinson SF Toby Hardwick
			18 8:30 AM Cub Run Stream Valley Park Eton Morel		May 20-22 Chincoteague Spring Weekend <i>Members only/reservations</i> <i>required</i> <i>Sign up began March 16 @6 am</i> Elton Morel Larry Meade	21 7:30 AM Occoquan Bay NWR Phil Silas Ken Hunt
				26 8:30 AM Neabsco RP - Boardwalk Phil Silas		28 8 AM Crow's Nest NAP - Raven Road entrance Michael Lott Elton Morel
			<u>June 1</u> 8:30 AM Long Branch Tom Nardone Dixie Sommers			4 7:30 AM Bristoe Station Battlefield Park Toby Hardwick

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
June						11 9 AM Limberlost Trail, Shenandoah NP X-trip <i>Elton Morel, Larry Meade</i> <i>Email Elton Morel for</i> <i>details</i> <i>(eltonlmorel@verizon.net)</i>
			15 9:30 AM Meadowood Recreation Area - Mustang Trailhead <i>Birds, Butterflies &</i> <i>Dragonflies</i> <i>Larry Meade</i>			18 8 AM Clarks Crossing Park - Bluebird Trail <i>Larry Meade</i>

DIRECTIONS
NVBC Meeting (4/21) Online
meeting using Zoom Platform.

Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park (6/4) 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 mi. 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.

Clarks Crossing Park - Bluebird Trail (6/18) 9850 Clarks Crossing Rd, Vienna 22182 From I-495, exit onto Chain Bridge Rd (Rt 123) toward Vienna. Continue on Maple Avenue (still Rt 123) in Vienna, turn onto Beulah Rd. Continue for about 1 mile until left turn onto Clarks Crossing Road. Continue to the end of Clarks Crossing and park at the parking lot overlooking the W&OD Trail.

Clifton Institute (4/23) 6712 Blantyre Rd, Warrenton 20187 Take I-66 West to exit 40, to merge onto US-15 south towards Haymarket (0.4 mi), then turn right onto VA-55 West. Drive 5 mi. and turn left onto Blantyre Rd. Proceed 5.6 mi. and then turn right on to a dirt road. Drive

northwest for about 0.3 mi. to the first lake and park in the parking lot on the left. Meet your leader at this parking lot. Please do not drive up to the house and park there.

Conway-Robinson State Forest (5/14) 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.

Crow's Nest NAP-Raven Road entrance (5/28) From I-95 take the Stafford Exit (exit 140). Take Rt 630 (Courthouse Road) one mi. east to Stafford (intersection of 630 and US 1). Cross US 1 and continue east on Rt 630 for about 2.5 mi. Turn right onto Rt 629 (Andrew Chapel Road) and continue for 0.9 mi. Go under the railroad overpass at the community of Brooke and turn left onto Rt 608 (Brooke Road). Continue for 1.4 mi., then turn right onto gravel Rt 609 (Raven Road). Cross the 1-lane bridge over Accokeek Creek and continue for 0.2 mi. The Raven Road Access gate for Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve will be on the left. Then travel 1.5 mi. on the gravel road until reaching the 18-space parking lot.

Cub Run Stream Valley Park (5/18) 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 Blueridge 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

Fort C. F. Smith (4/20, 5/11) 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.

Leesylvania State Park (4/30) 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

Trip Directions

Leesylvania State Park (continued)
and proceed 2 mi. to park entrance on right. After passing through the park entrance gate, go 2.2 mi. to end of paved road and park in "Picnic Area" parking lot, immediately before turn-around circle at fishing pier. State fee area.

Long Branch Nature Area (5/4, 6/1)
625 S Carlin Springs Rd, Arlington 22204 Take Rt 50, east from Fairfax or west from Rosslyn to Carlin Springs exit. Go south on Carlin Springs 0.5 mi. to Nature Center on left, just south of N. Va Community Hospital on left. Meet at Nature Center parking lot.

Meadowood Recreation Area (4/13)
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.

Meadowood Recreation Area-Mustang Trail (6/15) 10702 Harley 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 about 2.5 miles passing main Meadowood entrance on right. Turn right on Harley Rd and then an immediate right into the Mustang Trailhead parking lot.

Neabsco Regional Park - Boardwalk (5/26) 15125 Blackburn Rd, Woodbridge 22191 From I-495, take I-95 south about 14 mi. to exit 156 (Dale City/Rippon Landing/Rt. 784). Take exit 156A for Rt 784 east toward Rippon Landing. Continue 0.7 mi. cross Rt 1 where Dale Blvd becomes Rippon Blvd and continue down the hill another 0.4 mi. to a stop light and turn right on Blackburn Rd. The park parking lot is then 0.2 mi. away on the left.

Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge (4/16, 5/21) 13950 Dawson Beach Rd, Woodbridge 22192 From

Bird Walks at 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** Visit the Friends of Dyke Marsh web site, www.fodm.org
- **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/eventsindex.html#birds
- **Riverbend Park, first and third Fridays, 8 am, beginning May 6 to October 7.** Meet at the Nature Center parking lot off Jeffrey Road. No fee but call Riverbend Park at 703-759-9018 to register. Leader: Robin Duska

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 at the parking lot.

Potomac Overlook Regional Park (4/27) 2845 N. Marcey Rd, Arlington 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 mil. onto N. Marcey Rd and proceed 0.4 mi. to parking lot.

Trillium Trail-G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management

Area (5/7) (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.



Tricolored Heron, Snowy Egret and Great Egret standing in row taken at Chincoteague before start of official trip photographed by Seth Honig

February Birding in Nicaragua

The prospect of birding near volcanos and in cloud forest drew me to Bill Volkert and Connie Ramthun's February 2022 tour to Nicaragua. Likely because of its perennially fraught political climate and, despite its 750+ bird species, its lack of endemics, Nicaragua attracts few international birders. This was, however, the 16th trip for Bill and Connie, experienced and intrepid world travelers. Bill, an ornithologist and former naturalist at Wisconsin's Horicon Marsh, and Connie, who ran a native plant nursery, live in Wisconsin's northern Kettle-Moraine.

Birding in gardens at the Best Western Mercedes Hotel across from Managua Airport netted my first trip lifer, a Hoffman's Woodpecker. We then set off to Volcan Masaya National Park and Visitor Center for an introduction to the geology of this volatile region where three tectonic plates converge. Peering down into the smoking, active Masaya volcano, we watched two Peregrine Falcons flying along its cliffs. Recommended human exposure to the sulphureous fumes? No more than 15 minutes.

By midday, we were in the dry forest of Montibelli private reserve, home to 175 species including Turquoise-browed and Lesson's Motmots and 10 species of hummingbirds. I wish I'd recorded the surprisingly loud wingbeats of Red-billed Pigeons passing overhead there and at the nearby Chocoyero-El Brujo reserve—the flocks sounded as loud as small aircraft.

We worked with local guides at each site on our trip but unfortunately we “dipped” on Nicaragua's only near-endemic, the Nicaraguan Grackle (*Quiscalus nicaraguensis*), allegedly found along Lake Cochibola (Lake Nicaragua) and nearby Lake Managua. Our leaders had occasionally seen it on earlier trips.

From our next base in the attractive colonial city of Granada, we took a morning boat trip amid the 365 islands that were formed when nearby Mombacho volcano erupted around 20,000 years ago. Mangrove Swallows and my favorite Scissor-tailed Flycatchers dipped into the water as we motored around. Among the 39 species seen that morning were a Bare-throated Tiger Heron and amid hundreds of Montezuma Oropendola nests, an optimistic Giant Cowbird. Later, we stopped in San Juan de Oriente, home to potters for over 1000 years. The beautiful and inexpensive pottery features both pre-Colombian and modern designs.

Next we took the Pan-American Highway into the Matagalpa-Jinotega highlands, beautifully green even in the dry season. El Jaguar Reserve, run by eBird reviewer Liliana Chavarria-Duriaux and her husband, is home to 378 species. In the cloud forest surrounding Liliana's coffee fields, vulnerable Highland Guan reliably amble out into view. We had fine sightings of three of my favorite trip species: Black-crested Coquette, Strong-billed

Woodcreeper, and Slate-colored Solitaire with its ethereal calls.

I especially enjoyed a morning to the west of El Jaguar at Reserva Natural Cerros de Yali where the oak-pine forest, a vital wintering area for warblers including Grace's and Golden-winged, reaches its southern boundary in Central America. To our delight, four very similar warblers—Townsend's, Hermit, Golden-cheeked, and Black-throated Green—showed up within minutes of each other. Nearby, a pair of Red Crossbills, a wide-ranging species, fed placidly in a pine.

We went on to enjoy more cloud forest at Selva Negra (Black Forest), where we stayed in lovely green-roofed German-influenced chalets. A Pale-billed Woodpecker, like other *Campephilus* woodpeckers including the extinct Ivory-billed, did its double-knock drumming out along a steep trail. I especially enjoyed watching male and female Three-wattled Bellbirds interact and listening to the male's echoing call.

Nicaragua's handful of ornithologists participate in the Neotropical Flyways Project, monitoring and tagging birds for the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. Ecotourism provides valuable support in this vulnerable habitat, but travel now is complicated by the Nicaraguan government's Covid testing documentation requirements and concerns about birding equipment. Four travelers from Bill and Connie's two February tours were unable to enter the country, due to the former. After our leaders' equipment was confiscated upon their arrival, they successfully negotiated for its return and for ours to be allowed in when the rest of us arrived on later flights. I therefore recommend birders not travel independently to the country at this time unless they have contacts in Nicaragua who can help them negotiate such possible impediments.

Despite the pre-arrival issues described, this was one of the more pleasant, well-paced, and satisfying birding trips I've taken. As the only non-Wisconsinite in our group, I also enjoyed learning from others who had far more hiking/hunting/farming/gardening experience than I do. Lodgings were comfortable and very clean.

Our group trip list was 211 species during 10 birding days. Bill and Connie plan to return to Nicaragua in 2024 and can be contacted via his website, which also links to Bill's “Where To Watch Birds in Nicaragua” guide: <http://www.billvolkert.com>.

—Robin Duska



Strong-billed Woodcreeper (above) photographed by Robin Duska

(Note: additional trip photographs in online addendum)

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JOIN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB

Northern Virginia Bird Club dues for 2022 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: April 21, September (tbd), and November (tbd), 2022.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, June 2, 2022, 7:30 pm. To join the Zoom board meeting or to have items put on the agenda, please email lgmeade@gmail.com.

Deadline for next issue of *The Siskin*: The August issue will include activities through October 2022. Please send items for publication by **July 1, 2022** to the editors at nvbc-siskineditor@gmail.com.

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Chincoteague Winter Trip Birds

Photographed by Seth Honig



Snowy Egret



Tricolored Heron



Red-breasted Mergansers



Northern Gannet



Marbled Godwit

Nicaragua Trip Photographs

by Robin Duska



Above: Spectacled Owl at Selva Negra
eBird hotspot link: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L7905672>

Top Right: Highland Guans at Reserva El Jaguar
eBird hotspot link: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1009551>

Middle: Crimson-collared Tanager at Reserva El Jaguar
eBird link: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1009551>

Below left: Massaya Volcano, Masaya Volcano National Park. eBird hotspot link: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L787009>

Below right: Mombacho Volcano view from Lake Nicaragua as we birded among 365 islands on Lake Nicaragua eBird hotspot link: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1434752>

