



The SISKIN

Newsletter of the Northern Virginia Bird Club

Vol. 71, No. 4

November 2026

www.nvabc.org

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Insert - 2027 membership renewal notice

NVBC Donations

The Northern Virginia Bird Club (NVBC) is a 501(c)(3) organization as defined by the Internal Revenue Service. Contributions to NVBC are tax-deductible under Section 170 of Internal Revenue Code. Donations to the club enable the Club to bring in high-quality speakers to the general meetings, help support the printing and mailing of the Siskin, and keep dues affordable. A portion of the donations to the NVBC is set aside as the Education Grant Fund, from which NVBC makes a donation at the end of the fiscal year to an organization in Northern Virginia, Virginia, or the DMV, whose missions are aligned with our education, research, enjoyment, and conservation goals and for whom a donation from NVBC would make a difference. We welcome donations of all sizes! Donate via PayPal at <https://nvabc.org/donate/>, or, if you would like to send us a check, make your check payable to NVBC and mail it to: PO Box 5812, Arlington, VA 22205-0812.

NVBC GENERAL MEETING—TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 7 PM

American Bird Conservancy: Conserving birds and their habitat in Virginia and beyond

Speaker: Daniel J. Lebbin

Dan will talk about bird conservation and some of American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) efforts to conserve birds and their habitats for birds in Virginia and Latin America. Work in Virginia includes advocacy for terns and Ospreys, forest management in the Appalachians, and land conservation in Guatemala for wintering migratory birds. Work in Latin America focuses on reserve creation and management, reforestation of degraded areas and implementing conservation practices on farms to enhance habitat for migratory birds. He will end with a few suggestions we can all do to contribute to bird conservation in our own homes and communities.



Osprey photographed by Daniel Lebbin

Dan Lebbin is ABC's Vice President of Threatened Species. Dan co-authored *The American Bird Conservancy Guide to Bird Conservation*. Prior to ABC, Dan completed a PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Cornell University. A lifelong birder, Dan enjoys bird illustration and photography.

General Meeting Notes: Early bird refreshments start at 6:30 p.m. 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

Birding is a rewarding year-round activity. Despite the cold temperatures and lower avian diversity, even winter can provide great birding. Winter has a different mix of species than other seasons and it's a good time for rare or unusual birds to show up. The Red-flanked Bluetail at Great Falls last winter is a good example. Winter also brings Christmas Bird Counts which are a great way for birders of all experience levels to get involved in citizen science.

For me, one of the best things about winter birding is the opportunity to witness what I call an "avian spectacle". This is where a large, or often huge number of birds gather in one place. Various types of birds do this, including waterfowl, raptors, and blackbirds. When you witness a spectacle, the wonder of it makes braving the chill of winter well worth it.

One of the first spectacles that I remember witnessing was at the Blackwater Refuge in Maryland where I happened upon a huge flock of Snow Geese sitting in fields on both sides of the road I was on. I got out of my car and soon after thousands of Snow Geese blasted off into the air all around me. Most of them were vocalizing and the sound they made reminded me of a jet engine during takeoff.

I also am thrilled when Bald Eagles gather in numbers. Once at Huntsmen Lake in Fairfax County, I counted twenty-eight eagles hanging out in a small park. They were there for a fish run and Bald Eagles of all ages

and plumages were perched all over the place. I later referred to this spectacle as "Eaglepalooza".

When the waterfowl gather at places like Occoquan Bay Refuge or Mason Neck Park, it's fun to pick through the rafts to find the unusual species mixed in with the thousands of Lesser Scaup or Ruddy Ducks. Who will be the first to separate out a Greater Scaup from all of those Lesser Scaup? Thousands of American Coots massed together can also be quite a spectacle, especially when a

Bald Eagle decides to make repeated dives on them attempting to catch one for a meal.

Blackbirds can form huge flocks in winter, especially on the Eastern Shore. Once I was driving there when my car was completely enveloped by a gigantic flock of blackbirds. Most of them were Red-winged Blackbirds. I was blinded by them, so I came to a stop and snapped a photo of a wall of blackbirds through my windshield. European Starlings can also put on a show when their flocks engage in

murmuration. This is when they form intricate patterns while flying in synchrony. Dunlins can do this too.

I hope that you can get out and bird this winter. If you go to the right places, there is a good chance that you will happen upon one of these avian spectacles. They are part of what makes us leave the house to look for birds no matter the temperature. I wish you good birding!

—Larry Meade



Snow Geese blasting off at Bombay Hook photographed by Larry Meade

Winter Chincoteague Trip

The Winter Chincoteague Weekend club trip is scheduled for February 5 to February 7 (Friday to Sunday), 2027. The trip will be limited to 24 people and sign-up procedures are detailed below. NVBC membership is required for this trip.

February is an excellent time to visit Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The Refuge is loaded with wintering waterfowl. As a change from previous trips which included birding at one of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel (CBBT) Islands, we will be visiting the Ocean City Inlet on the way home. We typically find 90 or more species on this trip. Highlights from previous years have been Northern Gannets, Red-necked Grebes, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Snow Geese, Brants, Common Goldeneyes, Long-tailed Ducks, Common Eiders, Harlequin Ducks, Purple Sandpipers, Great Cormorants and even Razorbills. We will also try again to listen and

watch for American Woodcocks displaying above the horse corral at dusk on Friday night.

Plans for the weekend include birding the Chincoteague area Friday afternoon starting at 3:30 p.m. (optional) and Saturday starting at 7:30 a.m. Activities on Friday and Saturday include birding along Beach Road, Swan Cove, Tom's Cove and around the Wildlife Loop. Time and tides permitting, we will also visit the Queen Sound Flats, the Chincoteague Mudflats and Mariner's Point. On Sunday, we will bird the Ocean City Inlet.

Because the Chincoteague weekends are such popular trips, we will continue with the new sign-up procedure to enable wider member participation. **Registration will open on Wednesday, November 11, 2026, at 6 a.m.** To sign up for this trip, please email Luke Holian at holian.luke@gmail.com. All members who send an email between 6 and 7 a.m. will be eligible to be put on the list.

Continued on p 3

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Tuesday, December 15, 2026

- *BROOKE, VA (Stafford area, lower Potomac)*

Contact coordinators and compiler, Laurel Bybell at lbybell@gmail.com or David Govoni at david.govoni@gmail.com.

Saturday, December 19, 2026

- *WASHINGTON D.C.*

Includes area of Virginia inside the Beltway and parts of Fairfax County south of Alexandria to include Dyke Marsh. To participate, email compiler, Larry Cartwright: prowarbler@verizon.net or contact Nature Forward (formerly Audubon Naturalist Society) through Pam Oves at Pam.Oves@natureforward.org.

Sunday, December 20, 2026

- *MANASSAS-BULL RUN*

To participate, contact Doug Levey by December 13 at neomorphis0920@gmail.com.

- *THE PLAINS/AIRLIE*

To participate, please register online at: <https://cliftoninstitute.org/event/27th-annual-the-plains-airlie-christmas-bird-count/>. If you have questions or need help registering, please contact coordinator, Bridget Bradshaw (email: bbradshaw@cliftoninstitute.org, phone: 540-341-3651).

- *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.

Sunday, December 27, 2026

- *NOKESVILLE*

For more information or to register, contact Evelyn Parks at the Prince William Conservation Alliance at alliance@pwconserve.org.

Monday, December 28, 2026

- *CENTRAL LOUDOUN*

Sign up at www.loudounwildlife.org or contact compiler, Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org or Bryan Henson at bhenson@loudounwildlife.org.

Saturday, January 2, 2027

- *CALMES NECK*

Parts of western Loudoun and eastern Clarke counties. Contact compiler, Margaret Wester at margaretwester@hotmail.com.

- *FORT BELVOIR*

To volunteer, contact compiler, Luke Holian at holian.luke@gmail.com.

Sunday, January 3, 2027

- *SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN MD/VA*

Count covers rural and urban areas across Montgomery and Frederick Counties, Maryland and the Luckett's sector in northern Loudoun County, Virginia. Contact coordinator Jo Cox at jobird11@gmail.com or phone 240-506-1723.

- *WALKERTON*

Count area is primarily in Middle Peninsula. Contact compiler, Fred Atwood at fredatwood@yahoo.com by December 13.

Winter Chincoteague Trip from p 2

However, club members who were **not** on the Winter 2026 or the Spring 2026 trip will get a higher priority, in the order received. They will be followed by those who have been on one of those trips, in time stamp order. Partners or a friend can sign up together, so long as all participants are registered club members. The 24 slots are likely to fill up very quickly and therefore, a waiting list will be started with those who respond in the first hour. Any club member who sends an email after 7 a.m. on November 11 will not be given the higher priority over those in the first hour but will be considered for any available slot or waitlisted in order of the time stamp. When signing up, please indicate whether you are interested in the group dinner on Saturday night at Bill's Seafood Restaurant. Please do not make your

hotel reservations until your trip registration has been confirmed.

We have obtained a special rate of \$94 plus tax per night on twenty rooms for Friday and Saturday nights at the Spark by Hilton Chincoteague Island (formerly Best Western) on Maddox Boulevard. A two-night stay is usually required. Participants should make their own reservations by calling 757-336-6557, press 1 for reservations. This number goes to the front desk and not the Hilton reservation line. Be sure to say that you are with the Northern Virginia Bird Club. Check-in time is 3 p.m. on Friday, February 5, with a prior 24-hour notice policy for cancellation. Also note that Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge has an entrance fee per car.

—*Luke Holian*

Northern Virginia Bird Alliance Winter Waterfowl Survey

On Saturday, February 6 and Sunday, February 7, 2027, birders of all skill levels will join up to count waterfowl in Fairfax, Arlington, Loudoun, 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@nvbirdalliance.org at the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance. Or contact Larry Cartwright at prowarbler@verizon.net.

Upcoming Trips and Events

Compiled by Luke Holian

Note:

- Beginning birders are welcome on all trips.
- When reservations are required, please contact one of the trip leaders. Contact info listed below.
- Check the NVBC website for updated information about trips: <http://www.nvabc.org/calendar-list-of-events/>.
- **Next-day rainy day make-up day may be possible if trip leader is available. Cancellation and make up day will be announced via NVBC eMail Exchange and web site.**
- 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>October</u>						
Trip Leaders Steve Bielamowicz gr8gosh@gmail.com Larry Cartwright 703-941-3142 Toby Hardwick 703-201-1517 Luke Holian 703-258-9432 Ben Jesup 703-786-8265 Ed LeGrand 908-268-6627 Joan Mashburn 703-209-8678 Larry Meade 571-275-2523 lgmeade@gmail.com Carol Mullen 571-313-9926 Tom Nardone 703-946-7738 Cindy Nickerson 917-825-5327 Karen Pao karen.i.pao@gmail.com Jim Pearson pear4sonjp@gmail.com			28 8 AM Meadowood Recreation Area - Lower Potomac Field Station Tom Nardone Carol Mullen			31 8 AM Aquia Landing Beach Park Luke Holian Larry Meade
			November 4 8:30 AM Long Branch Carol Mullen Jim Pearson			7 8 AM Leopold's Preserve Ed LeGrand Toby Hardwick
			11 8 AM Dyke Marsh Larry Cartwright Tom Nardone			14 8 AM Silver Lake RP Ed LeGrand Toby Hardwick
			17 NVBC Meeting 7 PM			21 8 AM Occoquan Bay NWR Steve Bielamowicz Larry Meade
			18 8 AM Woodbridge Veterans Memorial Park Carol Mullen Cindy Nickerson			28 8 AM Aquia Landing Beach Park Luke Holian Karen Pao
<u>December</u>						
			2 8:30 AM Long Branch Jim Pearson Carol Mullen			5 8 AM Blandy Farm Ed LeGrand Larry Meade
			9 8 AM Huntley Meadows Ben Jesup Tom Nardone			12 8 AM Elizabeth Hartwell NWR* & Pohick Boat Ramp Steve Bielamowicz Luke Holian
December 14, 2026- January 5, 2027 — CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS (NORTHERN VIRGINIA CBC See p. 3)						

DIRECTIONS

NVBC Meeting (11/17) 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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>January</u>			6 8:30 AM Long Branch Tom Nardone			9 8 AM Northern Neck X-trip Members only/ email leader to register Larry Meade Steve Bielamowicz
			13 8 AM Neabsco Regional Park - Boardwalk Jim Pearson Carol Mullen			16 8 AM Riverbend RP Steve Bielamowicz Ben Jesup
			20 8 AM Burke Lake Karen Pao Jim Pearson			23 8 AM Silver Lake RP Larry Meade Toby Hardwick
			27 8 AM Dyke Marsh Larry Cartwright Tom Nardone			30 8 AM Occoquan Bay NWR Luke Holian Karen Pao
<u>February</u>			3 8:30 AM Long Branch Tom Nardone			5 - 7 Chincoteague Weekend Members only Sign up via email starting on November 11, 2026, at 6 am Luke Holian Joan Mashburn

Aquia Landing Park (10/31, 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 (12/5) 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.

Burke Lake Park (1/20) 315 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 (11/11, 1/27) 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.

Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck NWR-Great Marsh Trail* & Pohick Boat Ramp (12/12) Fairfax (mailing Lorton 22079) From I-495, take I-95 south 7 mi. to Lorton exit. Left on Rte. 642 to Rte. 1. Right on Rte. 1 to Rte. 600 (Gunston Rd.). Go approximately 6 mi. to parking lot on right. To **Pohick Bay RP Boat Ramp**: Turn left onto Rte 600 (Gunston Rd), go 2.6 mi.. Turn right onto Pohick Bay Dr. Continue to parking lots next to bay

Huntley Meadows Park (12/9) 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.

Leopold's Preserve (11/7) 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 (11/4 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.

Trip Directions from page 4

Meadowood Recreation Area (10/28) 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.

Neabsco Regional Park - Boardwalk (1/13) 5125 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. Across 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.

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 (11/21, 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.

Riverbend Park (Visitor Center) (1/16) 8700 Potomac Hills St, Great Falls 22066 From I-495, take Rt. 193 west 5 mi. to Rt 603 (Riverbend Rd). Turn right onto Rt 603; go 2 mi. to Jeffery Rd. Turn right onto Jeffery; and 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 RP (11/14, 1/23) 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 miles 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.

Woodbridge Veterans Memorial Park (11/18) 14300 Veterans Dr, Woodbridge, 22191 From I-495, take I-95 south 9 mi. to (left) exit 161 (Woodbridge). Go south on Rt 1 about 3.5 mi. to left turn onto Featherstone Rd. Continue on Featherstone about a mile and cross the RR tracks, turn left and proceed about 1 mile to the community center on the left, meet near Veterans Drive in front of the center.

Bird Walks at Local Parks

- **Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, second Saturdays, 8 a.m.** Meet at the parking lot. Online registration. Visit the Loudoun Wildlife web site, www.loudounwildlife.org/events/
- **Dyke Marsh, Sundays, 8 a.m.** See directions. Visit the Friends of Dyke Marsh web site, www.fodm.org
- **Great Falls National Park, Sundays, 8 a.m.** Meet in the main parking lot near the Park Visitor Center.
- **Huntley Meadows Park, Mondays, 7 a.m. (Apr-Sep) 8 a.m. (Oct-Mar)** Meet in parking lot.
- **Merrimac Farm, last Sunday, 8 a.m.** Meet at Merrimac Farm Stone House. www.pwconserve.org/eventsindex.html#birds
- **Riverbend Park, first and third Fridays, 8 a.m. beginning April 3 to October 16.** Meet at the Nature Center parking lot off Jeffery Road. No fee but call Riverbend Park at 703-759-9018 to register. Leaders: Kris Lansing and Robin Duska
- **Sweet Run State Park, fourth Saturdays, 8 a.m.** Meet at Education Center. Online registration www.loudounwildlife.org/events/

Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2026

September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026

At the close of Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, the Club had \$14,144 in total assets.

In FY 2026, the Club's total revenues, including dues paid for 2026, donations, and miscellaneous incomes, totalled \$9,222. The Club's expenses for FY 2026, including meeting expenses (hall rental and speaker honoraria), organizational costs (such as PayPal fees, website, State of Virginia incorporation fees, group passes for field trips), and printing and postage for the Siskin, totalled \$8,191. See table below.

The Club made a donation of \$500 in memory of Brian Taber and to support the Brian Taber Conservation Grants Program of Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory (CVWO). In the letter acknowledging this donation, the Treasurer of CVWO noted, "Brian was a strong supporter of conservation, especially of birds, butterflies, and other pollinators and the habitats on which they depend. Grants will be provided to deserving non-profit partners that promote wildlife conservation." In selecting the recipient of the annual donation, the Board continues to be guided by where the Club's donation would make the most impact in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The membership chair reports 137 Family memberships and 331 individual memberships as of August 31, 2026 giving the club a count of 605 members.

Income received

Dues for 2026	\$6,350
Donations	2,830
Misc Income	62
Total Income	\$9,222

Expenses

Meeting expenses	\$1,400
Organizational costs	824
Printing and postage	5,468
Educational Grant:	
CVWO Brian Taber Conservation Program	500
Total Expense	\$8,191

Net for 2026 \$1,030

—Karen Pao, Treasurer

Islands and Endemics: Birding Jamaica

Last winter when dealing with snowcrete, I ended a cold afternoon with the thought, “it would be really nice to go someplace warm!”

So I started checking out trips – not too far away and reasonably soon. WINGS Birding Tours’ trip to Jamaica in late March fit the bill! I had been to Jamaica before for work and wasn’t a birder then, so it was on my birding radar. And I had traveled with the excellent guide Rich Hoyer before. Two-hour flight from Miami. Perfect!

Here’s the thing about islands: they have endemic bird species, a result of evolution in relative geographic isolation. Jamaica has 31 endemics out of 335 species (per Avilist). Even though I had birded quite a bit in the Caribbean and Central America, there was a chance of quite a few new birds.

Our group of 11 participants and 2 guides met in Montego Bay on March 26 and left the next morning, heading east along the north coast. By the end of the trip on April 3, we had visited multiple sites along the north and east coasts, the interior Blue Mountains, spots on the south coast, and Marshall’s Pen, a farm northwest of Kingston with lots of history. Along the way we tasted fresh seafood, callaloo, bammy, and Jamaica’s famous jerk recipes.

We did well on the endemics, with 29 out of 31 seen! Among the favorites were the two hummingbirds with extreme tail feathers - Red-billed and Black-billed Streamertails - and the Jamaican Tody, surely the cutest bird of the trip! (Alas, I didn’t get a photo.)



Red-billed Streamertail, Jamaica’s national bird, Starlight Chalet, Blue Mountains National Park, St Andrew Parish, photographed by Dixie Sommers

We saw several Vervain Hummingbirds, the world’s second smallest bird, only slightly larger than the Bee Hummingbird, which I saw in Cuba. Another treat was the Arrowhead Warbler, endemic to the central mountains. A big find for me was a distant view of Masked Ducks, a miss on other trips.



Vervain Hummingbird, Ecclesdown Road, Portland Parish, photographed by Dixie Sommers

Many of the birds we saw are versions of species seen elsewhere in the Caribbean. Put the word “Jamaican” before becard, blackbird, crow, elaenia, euphonia, lizard-cuckoo, mango, oriole, owl, pewee, spindalis, tody, vireo and woodpecker, and you have 14 species with equivalents in other places, such as Cuban Tody (a tiny insectivore) and Puerto Rican Mango (a hummingbird). We added to the birding experience with looks at butterflies, lizards, and amazing flowers and lush landscapes. We also saw the devastation visited on the west coast by Hurricane Melissa in 2025.

Marshall’s Pen, where we spent 3 nights, has a long history as a coffee plantation and now cattle and birding tour site. Its current owner and co-leader of our group, Anne Haynes-Sutton, is a PhD ecologist working in bird conservation and lead author of the most recent bird field guide to Jamaica. While hosting us at her home, she filled us in on its history.

If you are looking for an easy and interesting winter trip, Jamaica is a great choice! You can check out our list at <https://ebird.org/tripreport/495831> My photos are at <https://ddpix.smugmug.com/Jamaica-2026>

— Dixie Sommers

Note: additional photographs contained in on-line addendum

NORTHERN VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB
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MATERIAL**

JOIN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB

Northern Virginia Bird Club dues for 2027 are \$15 for Individual and \$25 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, <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 email Elizabeth Fenton at emfenton@cox.net.

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, Troy Barbour at tmbarbour+nvbc@gmail.com.

NVBC eMail Exchange

For emails on bird walk updates and late weather changes, get on our Exchange. We do not bombard members with local bird sightings or ID help requests. 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: November 17, 2026.

Next Board Meeting: Thursday, December 3, 2026, 7:30 p.m. 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 February issue will include activities through April 2027. Please send items for publication by **January 1, 2027**, to the editors at nvbcisiskineditor@gmail.com.

CLUB CONTACTS

President: Larry Meade, 571-275-2523

Vice President, Programs: Kay Bushman, 703-472-5399

Vice President, Field Activities: Luke Holian, 703-258-9432

Secretary: Cindy Nickerson, cnandcats@gmail.com

Treasurer: Karen Pao, karen.i.pao@gmail.com

Directors: Lori Barbour, 703-785-8673

Troy Barbour, 703-400-2085

Jeremy Beck, 703-517-1816

Joan Mashburn, 703-209-8678

Directors Emeritus: Charlotte Friend, Diane Marton, Elton Morel, Jean Tatalias, and Joanna Taylor

Membership: Elizabeth Fenton, emfenton@cox.net

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Northern Virginia Bird Club

2027 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

This is your 2027 dues notice. Annual dues are \$15.00 for individual membership and \$25.00 for family membership. Dues should be paid by December 31.

Club dues do not include Virginia Society of Ornithology membership.

Renewals: Please check your November 2026 Siskin mailing label. You do not owe dues if your label shows in the top left corner "27" (dues paid-through 2027) or a later year or "CO" (complimentary).

IMPORTANT NOTICE: YOU CAN JOIN AND PAY DUES ONLINE!!!

NVBC is using PayPal so members can JOIN and RENEW ONLINE. Go to the Club's web site, www.nvabc.org and click on the "join" tab. You can select individual or family memberships for one, two, or three years. As you complete the transactions, you will post your name, address and email information. Please add your email address (if different from your PayPal account email), phone number and names of family participants for family membership to "add special instructions to the seller."

PayPal is a way to send money securely, with the flexibility to pay by a customer's PayPal account, bank account, or credit card. When you pay online you can choose to pay by your PayPal account if you have one, but it is not required. You can pay by credit card as you would for any other online shopping transaction.

If you want to pay by check, complete the form and mail to the address at the bottom. You may also use this form to submit changes in your name and mailing information or you can contact the membership chair, Elizabeth Fenton, at emfenton@cox.net.

WAY TO HELP THE CLUB

- **Field trip leader:** If you are willing to volunteer to lead club bird trips, check ☐
- **Board officer/director:** Contact lgmeade@gmail.com if you are interested in serving as an officer, director or providing other assistance.
- **Donations:** The Northern Virginia Bird Club is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization to which donations are tax deductible. We welcome donations in order to continue our education efforts and also support various birding and conservation organizations. Use the DONATE link on the "join" page on the web site. Or you may send a check to the address below.

Northern Virginia Bird Club Membership

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

Email

Please check: ☐ **Renewal** ☐ **New Membership**

Dues:

Individual	☐	\$15.00/1 year	☐	\$30.00/2 years	☐	\$45.00/3 years
Family	☐	\$25.00/1 year	☐	\$50.00/2 years	☐	\$75.00/3 years

Please send this form with your dues payment (check payable to NVBC) to:

Northern Virginia Bird Club Membership, PO Box 5812, Arlington, VA 22205-0812

Birds of Jamaica

Photographed by Dixie Sommers



White-tailed Tropicbird, Happy Grove, Portland Parish



Jamaican Mango, Goblin Hill Villas, Portland Parish



Sad Flycatcher, Marshall's Pen, Manchester Parish



*Jamaican Peewee, Blue Mountains National Park,
Silver Hill Gap, St. Andrew Parish*



*Blue Mountain Vireo, Blue Mountains National Park,
St. Andrew Parish*



*Arrowhead Warbler, Blue Mountains National Park,
Silver Hill Gap, St. Andrew Parish*

Birds of Jamaica

Photographed by Dixie Sommers



*Jamaican Woodpecker; Ecclesdown Road, Portland Parish.
Same genus (Melanerpes) as our Red-bellied Woodpecker.*



*White-chinned Thrush, Goblin Hill Villas, Portland Parish.
Same genus (Turdus) as our American Robin.*



Northern Potoo, Marshall's Pen, Manchester Parish



Jamaican Owl, Marshall's Pen, Manchester Parish