



THE SISKIN

Newsletter of the Northern Virginia Bird Club

Vol. 57, No. 2

April–May 2012

www.nvabc.org



*Eastern Bluebird at Occoquan Bay NWR.
Photograph by Larry Meade.*

Inside:

- Chincoteague Spring Weekend: May 18–20. Space is still available. **Sign up now; you must make motel reservations by April 18 to receive our group rate.**
- Highland County summer weekend: June 8–10.
- Summer pelagic trip: July 28.
- Great Backyard Bird Count follow-up.
- *Birding Hot Spots of Central New Mexico*, a new book by Judy Liddell and Barbara Hussey.
- NVBC field trip calendar for April 11–June 16, 2012.

Male Eastern Bluebird. Photograph by Larry Meade.



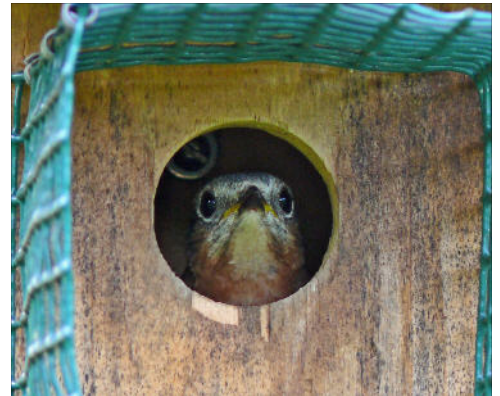
NVBC Meeting—Wednesday, April 18, 8 PM

ON THE TRAIL WITH BLUEBIRDS

Speaker

BARBARA CHAMBERS

Join us to hear our fellow club member Barbara Chambers, a former NVBC vice president for programs and a favorite trip leader. Barbara has had a longtime interest in bluebird trail work. In 1993 she started monitoring Fairfax Audubon's bluebird trail at Meadowlark Gardens and by 1996 was beginning to work with four colleagues to develop three new bluebird trails on Mason Neck. (She is still monitoring the same Pohick Regional Park Golf Course—for the 16th season!)



*Female in a Bluebird Box
Photograph by Larry Meade*

It was at Mason Neck that Barbara and her four colleagues founded the Virginia Bluebird Society to promote bluebirds and other native cavity nesters.

Now, 15 years later, there are 54 trails in Fairfax County and the number is growing. Statewide there are over 4,200 cavity nesting boxes that report data to Charlie Chambers. The Society currently has coordinators in 61 counties and cities in Virginia.

Barbara has served on the board and held a variety of positions in VBS, including Vice President for Education. She wrote and edited the newsletter for the first seven years of the organization and is now the Grant Chair and the State County Coordinator. She is also active in the North American Bluebird Society as a board member, the co-chair of their Nestbox Committee, chair of the NABS Speaker's Bureau, and, this year, chair of the Nominating Committee.

Early bird refreshments start at 7:30 PM. There will be a drawing for door prizes. If you have items you would like to donate as prizes, please bring them to the meeting. Northern Virginia Bird Club pins will be available for members who would like to purchase them (\$5 each).

Meeting place: Church of the Covenant, 2666 Military Road, Arlington, 22207. Directions are on p. 5.

Saturday, June 2

Walk the bluebird trail at Clarks Crossing with Larry Meade and Frances Raskin. See the field trip calendar for details and directions.

Presidential Peentings

As the weather gets warmer and late fall transitions into early spring (I don't think we had a winter this year), a birder's thoughts turn to visions of migration and breeding birds. There are many opportunities coming up for birders to get outside and enjoy our feathered friends. In addition to our regular field trips, the Northern Virginia Bird Club has weekend trips to Chincoteague and Highland County on the calendar. The Virginia Society of Ornithology has an annual meeting that is a joint meeting with the Tennessee Ornithological Society. It will be held just over the border in Johnson City, Tennessee. There is also International Migratory Bird Day and many birders are participating in birdathons to raise money for various organizations. Our speaker for the April meeting is Barbara Chambers, who will discuss Bluebirds and Bluebird box monitoring. Continuing with this theme, I will lead a trip to Clark's Crossing at the W&OD Trail in Vienna on June 2 where I will demonstrate how to check Bluebird boxes. Of course, we will also be looking for other birds while we are walking the Bluebird trail. Another new type of trip is the one on June 16 where we will concentrate on finding butterflies and dragonflies at Huntley Meadows. We will not ignore birds, however. We are a bird club, after all. Finally, I would like to mention plans to participate in a pelagic birding trip originating out of Hatteras, North Carolina, on July 28. This is a regularly scheduled trip and those who would like to go will need to sign up with Brian Patteson and also make their own lodging arrangements. Anyone still around on Sunday can join us for some land birding in the area. We will supply more details about this trip as the date gets closer.

Good Birding!

—Larry Meade



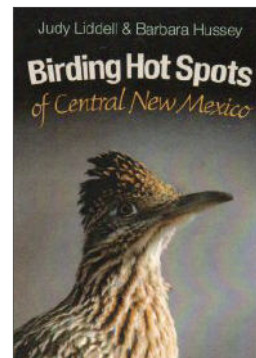
*Bald Eagles
at Pohick Bay.
Photograph by
Larry Meade.*

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT FOLLOW-UP

Participation in the 15th Great Backyard Bird Count, February 17–20, surpassed all previous records. Bird watchers in the U.S. and Canada submitted more than 104,000 checklists, reported 623 species, and observed more than 17.4 million birds. New checklist records were set in 22 states and in six Canadian provinces. A summary of some trends noted in this year's GBBC is now available on their website. For example, GBBC maps for reports of Snowy Owls plainly show the influx compared to previous years. Common Redpolls also moved farther south in western areas in search of food. Lack of acorns may have reduced reported numbers of Blue Jays in the Northeast. A flock of more than a million Tree Swallows turned the sky dark in Ruskin, Florida, which accounts for this bird's first-ever top-10 appearance. We hope many club members had fun submitting their counts.

—Jean Tatalias

A NEW BIRDING GUIDE



Birding Hot Spots of Central New Mexico

by Judy Liddell and Barbara Hussey

Anyone planning a birding trip in the area around Albuquerque, New Mexico, will want this new guide by Judy Liddell and Barbara Hussey.

A member of NVBC, Barbara Hussey commutes between her home in Arlington and Albuquerque where she and Judy are writing their next book about birding hot spots in northern New Mexico and the Santa Fe area.

A birder for over 30 years, Barbara is a former president, board member, birding field trip leader and newsletter editor for the Central New Mexico Audubon Society. She has coordinated National Audubon Society southwest regional conferences. She was a member of the founding alliance for the Rio Grande Nature Center in Albuquerque and has served as a field trip leader, bird festival coordinator and wetlands monitor there. Barbara was one of the founders of the New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors. She has experience as a birding guide in New Mexico, Arizona, Florida, Colorado, and California.

Having used many site guide books in their birding travels, Barbara and Judy found few with directions to the nearest rest rooms! With that in mind they expanded their guide to include rest rooms, water, picnic tables, gas stations, food, and lodging, plus general accessibility and trail conditions—in addition to the birds.

Birding Hot Spots of Central New Mexico is published by Texas A & M University Press as part of the W. L. Moody Jr. Natural History Series. Read more about it at <http://birdinghotspotscentralnm.com>.

CHINCOTEAGUE SPRING WEEKEND

Space is still available on our May 18–20 (Friday-Sunday) Chincoteague Spring Weekend. Headquarters will be at the Best Western Plus Chincoteague Island Motel on Maddox Blvd./Beach Road. Sign up with leader Val Kitchens (703-536-9310) for the weekend and events listed below. Elton Morel will colead. We have reserved a block of rooms for Friday and Saturday nights; our club rate is \$81 per night, single or double, including tax, points, and breakfast. Call the motel at 800-553-6117 **by April 18** to get our special group rate, and be sure to say you are with the Northern Virginia Bird Club. A two-night stay is usually required. Cancellation notice is 72 hours. Check-in time is 3 PM. NVBC membership is required for this weekend.

We will have an optional birding trip to Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge Friday; meet at 3:15 PM at the motel. Or meet us there Saturday at 8 AM. Saturday's activities will include an early morning bird walk, a beach walk, and a special birding trip to the Refuge Wash Flats on the Chincoteague Natural History Association (CNHA) bus in the afternoon. The wash flats are usually the best place on the refuge to see Gull-billed Tern and Blue Grosbeak, as well as close-up Chincoteague Ponies, often with "Pony" (Cattle) Egrets nearby or even on their backs! CHNA is charging a flat rate of \$250 for the bus (we can take 28 people). The per-person fee will depend on how many people sign up for the trip. On Sunday morning we will bird at Saxis Marsh, where the trip will end by noon. Copies of the weekend schedule will be available at the motel on Friday. Last year's highlights included Clapper Rail, Black-bellied and Piping Plovers, Black-necked Stilt, Whimbrel, Gull-billed and Least Terns, Black Skimmer, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Blue Grosbeak, and Seaside Sparrow.

We will arrange a group dinner on Saturday evening; other meals are on your own. The Best Western's continental breakfast begins at 6 AM and its rooms have mini-refrigerators. Bring binoculars, a field guide, a scope if you have one, a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, and good walking shoes. If you sign up and have to cancel, please let us know. Chincoteague NWR is a U.S. fee area.

—Val Kitchens



Eastern Screech-Owl in Highland County. Photograph by Reid Williamson.

SUMMER WEEKEND IN HIGHLAND COUNTY

Our summer trip to Highland County in the mountains of western Virginia, scheduled for the weekend of June 8–10 (Friday-Sunday), still has space available; trip limit is 16. Headquarters will be at the Highland Inn in Monterey (call 888-466-4682 for reservations, and say you are with NVBC); room prices vary. We will have an optional trip to the Blue Grass Valley on Friday afternoon; meet at the inn at 3:15 pm. Saturday morning, we will go to Paddy's Knob. Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning we will bird other areas of the county. We will arrange group dinners in the Highland Inn's dining room both evenings. The trip will end in Monterey about noon on Sunday. Last year's highlights included Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Alder and Least Flycatchers, Yellow-throated and Warbling Vireos, Cliff Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Scarlet Tanager, Vesper and Savannah Sparrows, and Bobolink. Call Val Kitchens (703-536-9310) to sign up for this weekend. Club membership is required.

—Val Kitchens

SUMMER PELAGIC TRIP

Members of the Northern Virginia Bird Club will be participating in the July 28, 2012, pelagic trip with Brian Patteson which departs from Hatteras, North Carolina, and travels to the Gulf Stream. In addition to the excellent birds we will see (including possible mega-rarities), we are also likely to encounter other types of ocean life such as marine mammals and sea turtles. On the day after the trip, we will be doing some land birding as we explore areas of Cape Hatteras such as Pea Island and the Hatteras Seashore. The plan as of now is to leave Northern Virginia early on Friday and come back sometime during the day on Monday. If you are interested in this trip, please sign up with Brian on your own at www.seabirding.com. You also need to make your own arrangements for lodging. I will be staying at the Cape Pines Motel in Buxton. More details will be forthcoming as the date gets closer, but it would be wise to not wait too long to sign up because the trip may fill up. Also be aware that Brian may not run the trip if it is undersubscribed, so it is best to have a group of people locked in ahead of time.

—Larry Meade

REMINDER: Register and make your motel reservations soon if you plan to attend this year's joint annual meeting of the Virginia Society of Ornithology and the Tennessee Ornithological Society the weekend of May 18–20 in Johnson City, Tennessee. Information is on the VSO website, www.virginiabirds.net.

UPCOMING TRIPS AND EVENTS

Compiled by Steve Williams

Note:

- Beginning birders are welcome on all trips.
- Call trip leaders to make reservations where they are required.
- If in doubt about a trip because of weather, call one of the leaders.
- Check the NVBC website for any updated information about trips: <http://www.nvabc.org/trips.htm>. To receive email notices, add your name to the NVBC eMail Exchange. Directions for signing up are on the back page of the newsletter.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																						
April			11 8:30 AM Lubber Run Charlotte Friend Val Kitchens			14 8:30 AM Fort C F Smith Val Kitchens Elton Morel																						
			18 8:30 AM Eakin Park Catherine Kubo 8 AM NVBC Meeting Church of the Covenant, Arlington			21 7:30 AM Leesylvania SP Linda Chittum Elton Morel																						
				26 8 AM Huntley Meadows Steve Williams		28 7:30 AM Thompson WMA Trillium Trail <u>WMA Access</u> <u>Permit required—</u> <u>see directions</u> Larry Meade Peter Ross																						
May			2 8:30 AM Long Branch Val Kitchens	3 8:30 AM Long Branch Val Kitchens Joanna Taylor		5 7:30 AM Occoquan Bay NWR Peter Ross Steve Williams																						
6 8 AM Dyke Marsh Friends of Dyke Marsh			9 7:30 AM Huntley Meadows Catherine Kubo			12 8 AM Fort C F Smith Val Kitchens Elton Morel																						
			16 8:30 AM Lubber Run Charlotte Friend Val Kitchens		18–20 Chincoteague Spring Weekend <u>Members only: reservations required</u> Val Kitchens Elton Morel	19 7:30 AM Meadowood Peter Ross Steve Williams																						
<p><u>Field Trip Leaders</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>Linda Chittum</td><td>703-967-8643</td></tr> <tr><td>Joe Coleman</td><td>540-554-2542</td></tr> <tr><td>Charlotte Friend</td><td>703-532-0207</td></tr> <tr><td>Gerco Hoogeweg</td><td>540-822-5857</td></tr> <tr><td>Val Kitchens</td><td>703-536-9310</td></tr> <tr><td>Catherine Kubo</td><td>703-352-1238</td></tr> <tr><td>Larry Meade</td><td>703-206-9030</td></tr> <tr><td>Elton Morel</td><td>703-553-4860</td></tr> <tr><td>Frances Raskin</td><td>202-330-1742</td></tr> <tr><td>Peter Ross</td><td>703-528-2731</td></tr> <tr><td>Steve Williams</td><td>703-619-0381</td></tr> </table>			Linda Chittum	703-967-8643	Joe Coleman	540-554-2542	Charlotte Friend	703-532-0207	Gerco Hoogeweg	540-822-5857	Val Kitchens	703-536-9310	Catherine Kubo	703-352-1238	Larry Meade	703-206-9030	Elton Morel	703-553-4860	Frances Raskin	202-330-1742	Peter Ross	703-528-2731	Steve Williams	703-619-0381		24 8:30 AM Eakin Park Charlotte Friend Catherine Kubo		26 8 AM Blue Ridge Center (with Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy) Gerco Hoogeweg Larry Meade Joe Coleman
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>May (cont.)</u>				31 Remington Sod Farms <i>contact leader for time and directions</i> Joanna Taylor Val Kitchens	June	2 8 AM Bluebird Trail Larry Meade Frances Raskin
		6 8:30 AM Long Branch Charlotte Friend Val Kitchens			8-10 Highland County Weekend <i>Members only; registration required</i> Val Kitchens	
		13 8:30 AM Eakin Park Charlotte Friend Catherine Kubo 8 PM NVBC board meeting				16 10 AM Huntley Meadows Butterflies and Dragonflies Larry Meade Frances Raskin
<i>Trips resume in mid-August. Have a good summer!</i>						

Directions

NVBC Meeting (4/18) Church of the Covenant, 2666 Military Rd, Arlington, 22207. From intersection of Spout Run Pkwy and Lorcum Lane, go about a half mile on Lorcum, turn right onto Nellie Custis Dr at the bottom of the hill, and continue on Nellie Custis as it bears right and becomes Military Rd. Stay on Military and turn left into church drive just after passing traffic light at Marcey Rd. After entering church drive, turn right and go to lower lot. The door to Fellowship Hall, where meeting is held, is at the west end of the lot.

Bluebird Trail (6/2) From I-495, exit onto Chain Bridge Rd (VA-123) toward Vienna. Continue on Maple Ave (still 123) in Vienna, turn onto Beulah Road. Continue for about one mile until a left turn onto Clark's Crossing Road. Continue to the end of Clark's Crossing and park at the parking lot overlooking the W&OD Trail.

Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (5/26) 11661 Harpers Ferry Road, Purcellville. From Leesburg, take Rt 7 west 3 mi. to VA-9 exit toward Hillsboro/Charles Town, WV. Take VA-9 (Charles Town Pk) west 9.8 mi. to Harpers Ferry Rd (Rt 671). Take slight right onto Harpers Ferry Rd. and continue 5.6 mi. to 11661. Meet at visitor center.

Dyke Marsh (5/6) From Alexandria, take Mount Vernon Pkwy south. Cross I-495; continue 1.2 mi. to Belle Haven Park entrance on left. Meet at south parking lot.

Eakin Park (4/18, 5/24, 6/13) From I-495, take Rt 50 west one mile to Prosperity Ave;

turn left onto Prosperity and go one mile to parking lot on left.

Ft. C.F. Smith (4/14, 5/12) From I-66 east, take Exit 72 (Spout Run Pkwy). At traffic light, turn right onto Lee Hwy. At successive traffic lights, turn left onto Spout Run Pkwy, left onto Lorcom Lane, and right onto Fillmore St. Go one block on Fillmore, turn right onto N 24th St and continue to park on left at 2411 N 24th. Meet in parking lot at east end of park.

Huntley Meadows Park (4/26, 5/9, 6/16) From I-495, take Rt 1 south 3 mi. to Lockheed Blvd; turn right on Lockheed, and go 0.5 mi. to park entrance on left. Meet in parking lot.

Leesylvania State Park (4/21) 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 US Rt 1. Turn right (south) on Rt. 1 and go 0.9 miles 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 miles 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 5/2, 5/3, 6/6) From Rt 50, take Carlin Springs exit and go south on Carlin Spgs. 0.5 mi. to Nature Center on left, just south of No. Va. Community Hospital. Meet in Nature Ctr. parking lot.

Lubber Run Park (4/11, 5/16) Take Rt 50 or Wilson Blvd east from Fairfax or west from Rosslyn to George Mason Dr. Go north from Rt 50, south from Wilson, to N Park Dr.

Meet in parking lot at Lubber Run Ctr, 300 N. Park Dr, on west side of George Mason.

Meadowood (5/19) From I-495, take I-95 south 7 mi. to Lorton exit. Left on Rte. 642. Immediately after passing under RR tracks (1/4 mi.) turn right on Lorton Market Rd., which soon becomes Gunston Cove Rd. After crossing Rte. 1, road becomes Gunston Rd. Go 1.8 mi. to 10406 Gunston Rd. (BLM, Lower Potomac Station Office). Park on right next to horse barns just before field station building.

Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge (5/5) From I-495, take I-95 south 9 mi. to (left) Exit 161 (Woodbridge). South on Rt 1 about 2 mi. to Dawson Beach Rd. Go left on Dawson Beach 0.7 mi. to entrance gate. Meet in parking lot. Bring scope. US fee area.

G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area, Trillium Trail (4/28) 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 Freezeland Rd (Rt 638). Turn left (north) and follow Freezeland, 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: an Access Permit is required.** You can get a permit:

- **Online** at www.dgif.virginia.gov, using Mastercard or Visa. You will get your permit immediately by email.
- **By telephone (1-866-721-691)**, during normal business hours. DGIF can give you your permit number over the phone.
- **At an establishment that serves as a license agent.** DGIF has a locator on its website. **You cannot buy a permit at Thompson WMA.**

Birds of the Late Spring and Early Summer Season

Spring bird migration in our area usually peaks the first half of May, but it will be interesting to see if migrants arrive earlier this year because of the mild winter of 2011–12. In late May and June our focus shifts to summer residents and nesting species. Highlights of 2011 trips at this season were:

May 5—Barred Owl, Chimney Swift, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pee-wee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Swainson's and Wood Thrushes, Gray Catbird, Northern Parula, Black-throated Blue and Yellow-rumped Warblers, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Canada Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Indigo Bunting, and Baltimore Oriole at Long Branch Nature Area. *May 7*—Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Eastern Kingbird, Tree, Northern Rough-winged, and Barn Swallows, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Cape May and Blackpoll Warblers, Chipping and Savannah Sparrows, and Orchard Oriole at Fort C. F. Smith Park. *May 11*—Cooper's Hawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Magnolia and Black-and-white Warblers, and Northern Waterthrush at Lubber Run Park. *May 14*—Gadwall, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Northern Bobwhite, Wild Turkey, Great Egret, Northern Harrier, King Rail, Black-billed Cuckoo, White-eyed Vireo, Purple Martin, Eastern Bluebird, Brown Thrasher, Blackburnian, Prairie, and Prothonotary Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Field Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak at Occoquan Bay NWR. *May 28*—Green Heron, Broad-winged Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Acadian and Willow Flycatches, Yellow-throated Vireo, Common Raven, Blue-winged, Cerulean, and Worm-eating Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Summer Tanager at Blue Ridge Center.

June 16—Horned Lark, Dickcissel, and Eastern Meadowlark at Remington and Phelps WMA. *June 18*—Wood Duck and Killdeer at Huntley Meadows Park.

—Val Kitchens

WINTER WEEKEND REPORTS

Chincoteague

Our 2012 Winter Weekend was held February 3–5. About 25 NVBC members came and enjoyed the mild weather, and 20 went on our Sunday Chesapeake Bay-Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) trip. Altogether we tallied 115 species for the weekend. The most memorable birds of the weekend were the Northern Gannets; we must have seen over a thousand and we had great, close looks at them! Highlights on Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge Friday afternoon were our first Tundra Swans and several species of shorebirds, including Marbled Godwits, Black-bellied Plovers, Willets, a Red Knot, Western Sandpipers, and Dunlin in Swan Cove, and about 20 Red-throated Loons at the Ocean Beach (probably our highest count ever for this species). On the Wildlife Drive, we found two Bald Eagles, a Northern Harrier, and lots of ducks, including Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, and Green-winged Teal. On Saturday, we found Bonaparte's Gulls and Forster's Terns on the refuge, and the gannets were much closer to shore. We also birded the Chincoteague Causeway out to the Oyster beds and some feeders in town. At the Oyster beds we found Long-tailed Ducks, a Horned Grebe, a Peregrine Falcon sitting on a duck blind, and American Oystercatchers. At the feeders we got good looks at Brown-headed Nuthatches and Brown Creepers. Most disappointing was the lack of Snow Geese; the only sighting was a small group flying over seen by a few people early Saturday morning. On Sunday morning we stopped at Kiptopeke State Park, where we saw our only Brown Pelicans, on the way to the CBBT. On the islands, highlights (in addition to Northern Gannets everywhere) included a sub-adult male Harlequin Duck, all three scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Ruddy Turnstones, Purple Sandpipers, and Harbor Seals. Finally, thanks again to Jack and Peggy Greenwood for hosting a pre-dinner social hour for our group on Saturday and to Marv Rubin for inviting us to his bird feeders and for making our Saturday dinner reservations at Bill's Restaurant.

Highland County

Our 2012 Winter Weekend was scheduled for February 17–19, but due to bad weather in the mountains, it was postponed to the following weekend. The eight NVBC members who went on the rescheduled trip found 52 species of birds in Highland County on Saturday and Sunday. (We spent Friday afternoon and evening in Staunton but saw very few birds due to high winds there.) On Saturday morning our first stop in Highland County was at the feeders in McDowell, where we found our first of several Fox Sparrows and 50 American Goldfinches, but no Pine Siskins this year. Then we drove to Monterey, checked in at the Highland Inn, formed carpools, and headed north on Route 220 to the Blue Grass Valley. We saw our only Golden Eagle (an immature) and a flock of 26 Wild Turkeys along the way. In Blue Grass we found about 20 Common Ravens, several Cedar Waxwings, an American Pipit, and two Rough-legged Hawks (one dark phase and one light phase) before breaking for lunch. After lunch we returned to Blue Grass and added three Rusty Blackbirds and a pair of Horned Larks to our list. Then we drove to Hightown, stopping along the way at some feeders where we found our only Black-capped Chickadees. On Sunday morning, we went south on Route 220 and drove along the Jackson River to Bolar, where we found 14 Hooded Mergansers and seven Black Ducks on the river and an Eastern Phoebe nearby. Finally before heading home, five of us made one last loop around the Blue Grass Valley and found a red-phase Eastern Screech-Owl sitting up in its hole enjoying the Sunday sun! We should also mention that we saw ten each of Bald Eagles and American Kestrels in Highland County. The Bald Eagles seem to be increasing along with the trout hatcheries there!

—Val Kitchens and Elton Morel



Tundra Swans at Pohick Bay

Limpkin at Lake Marian, Florida, photographed at the Space Coast Birding Festival.



Birds at Home and Away

Photos by Larry Meade



Barred Owl at Eakin Park.

Roseate Spoonbill at Merritt Island, Florida, during the Space Coast Birding Festival.





THE SISKIN
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JOIN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA BIRD CLUB

Northern Virginia Bird Club dues for 2012 are \$8 for Individual and \$12 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.

If you miss an issue of *The Siskin* or need to report an address or ZIP Code change, please send an email message to nvabc@verizon.net or leave a message for Charlotte Friend at 703-532-0207.

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

NVBC ON THE WEB

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

NVBC eMAIL EXCHANGE

By participating in the club's email exchange, you can get email notices of late updates to *The Siskin* and the field trip schedule. To join the exchange and receive a list of email addresses for other participating NVBC members, send an email to nvabc@verizon.net. Put "EXCHANGE" in the subject field and your full name in the message area. You must place your name on the list in order to receive information about other members. The list is for NVBC members' use only.

General Meeting Dates: April 18, September 19, and November 28, 2012; February 20 and April 17, 2013.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, June 13, 8 PM, at Diane Marton's home. All club members are welcome at board meetings. For directions and information, or to have items put on the agenda, please call or email Diane Marton.

Deadline for next issue of *The Siskin*: The August issue will include activities through October 2012. Please send items for publication by **July 1, 2012** to the editor, Dorothy Tella, at dtella@cox.net.

CLUB CONTACTS

President: Larry Meade, 703-206-9030

Vice President, Programs: Joanna Taylor 703-243-5989

Vice President, Field Activities: Steve Williams, 703-619-0381

Secretary: Diane Marton, 703-527-7360

Treasurer: Jean Tatalias, 703-281-6099

Immediate Past President: Paul Mocko, 703-243-4987

Directors: Steve Bruck, 703-425-8584; Catherine Kubo, 703-352-1238; Elton Morel, 703-553-4860

Directors Emeritus: Len Alfredson, Val Kitchens, Don Wiesnet

Membership: Charlotte Friend, 703-532-0207

Webmaster, www.nvabc.org: Len Alfredson, 703-416-2718

Editor, *The Siskin*: Dorothy Tella, 703-356-0309

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