



March 2011 Newsletter

*Celebrating 54 Years
of Birding! 1957-2011*

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Visit our club's website:
www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

Mill Mountain Zoo will provide a bag of bird seed (striped sunflower in 40 lb bags. or 30 lb bags of chickadee mix) to club members who become members of the zoological society. Family memberships are \$50.00 and are a terrific way to support the zoo and provide food to our feathered friends.

If interested, visit the zoo. David Ornforff, General Curator, will be glad to help you out.
(540) 343-3241 ext 31

FEBRUARY MEETING

We watched an informative video by Don and Lillian Stokes titled *Attracting Birds - Birdfeeders, Birdhouses and Birdbaths*.



Scarlet Tanager Jim Stevenson©

Sign Up for Bluebird Monitoring by March 14

Come to the March meeting to sign up for bluebird monitoring on any of our bluebird trails. We have three—on the Blue Ridge Parkway, at Hanging Rock Golf Course, and at Botetourt Country Club. If you can't attend the meeting, call Alyce Quinn at 719-0109, or email her at twoquinns@yahoo.com. Be prepared to let her know if there are any dates that you will not be available to monitor. Deadline to sign up will be March 14. If you've never monitored before, we can arrange for someone to go with you your first time. Sign up to monitor as many or as few times as you like. The trails are checked once a week, April through August, and it takes a couple of hours each time. It's great fun—just ask anyone who's done it! You'll get to look into the boxes and see babies at all stages of development. Try it—we bet you'll like it!



NEXT MEETING:

**March 14, 7:00 p.m.
Grandin Court Baptist
Church**

Beyond Birdwatching

State and federally permitted Category IIA, Avian Rehabilitator and birder, Maureen Eiger will take you inside the world of wild bird rehabilitation.

Take a close look at what is involved to rehabilitate sick, injured, or orphaned wild birds. Learn prevention tips and what to do when you find window hit, cat bit or orphaned birds or nests. Test your bird identification skills with a baby bird quiz.

Please bring a roll of paper towels and/or a box of tissues to help save a bird!

Please join us for dinner before the meeting at 5:30 p.m. at the Brambleton Deli at 3655 Brambleton Road.

FIELD TRIPS

CHAIRMAN

BETH GRIFFIN 265-4853

SHARE THE COST OF GAS WHEN YOU CARPOOL

March 12, 8:00 AM, Claytor Nature Center

Meet leader Bill Hunley (774-2397) at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot of the Bonsack Kroger on Route 460. This will be an easy walk along the Big Otter River. Expect wooded and old field bird species. Bring a lunch. This is a new location for a bird club outing.

March 26, 8:30 AM, Bent/Poor Mountain

Meet leader Robin Austin (929-9071) at Bent Mtn Elementary School at 8:30 a.m. We'll bird some new areas, along the road to Stoneridge and the Bottom Creek Loop. Expect early migrants. Little to no walking.

FIELD NOTES

February 19, Backyard Birding

Sixteen birders came out for this event at Carol Whiteside's home in SW Roanoke County off Cotton Hill Rd. Some birded from indoors, watching Carol's many feeders while others walked the grounds. 16 species were seen. Highlights included: brown creeper, yellow bellied sapsucker, white-breasted nuthatch, pine siskin, and red tailed hawk. After everyone left, Carol spotted a flock of turkeys. Thanks to Carol for her hospitality.

Feb. 26th, Duck Walk

Eighteen birders, led by Tim and Alyce Quinn, enjoyed a sunny but brisk morning of birding Murray's Pond (Waterfall Lake), Greenfields and Steven's Road Pond.

They saw the following: ring-billed gull, house sparrow, black vulture, turkey vulture, American crow, gadwall, Canada goose, coot, ring-necked duck, mallard, Carolina wren, green-winged teal, white-breasted nuthatch, eastern bluebird, northern mockingbird, house finch, northern flicker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, northern harrier, mourning dove, blue jay, grackle, song sparrow, snipe, bufflehead, hooded merganser, red-winged blackbird, red-tailed hawk, kingfisher, canvasback, ruddy duck, American robin, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, great blue heron, white-crowned sparrow, northern cardinal, mute swan and the best bird of the day, a loggerhead shrike!!



SIGHTINGS

VSO Outer Banks Field Trip – Feb. 11-13

Thousands and thousands of northern gannets traded back and forth just off the beaches on Saturday to the delight of those attending the trip. There were 134 bird species tallied during the weekend, some of which were: "Ipswich" savannah sparrow, red-throated loon, sora, northern shoveler, northern pintail, green-winged teal, American avocet, northern saw-whet owl (heard) and great-horned owl (heard), American woodcock, Wilson's snipe, American pipit, Swainson's hawk, northern harrier, American kestrel, bald eagle, red-tailed hawk, merlin, red-shouldered hawk, and sharp-shinned hawk.

Attending from the RVBC: Elly & Pam Wefel, Bob & Andy Biggs, Tim & Alyce Quinn, Tom & Pat Johnson, Larry (and Barbara) Hutson, Norris & Janie Ford, John & Eunice Hudgins, Marshall Daniels, and Holly Woodson.

Thanks to Jerry Via, Bill Akers, and Meredith Bell for organizing a great weekend that included great weather for the field trips on Saturday and Sunday.

JAMES L. AYERS

Jim, 74, a past president of The Roanoke Valley Bird Club and field trip coordinator for several years, died on February 2, 2011.

"He was not a birder when I showed him a gray-cheeked thrush at North Creek in 1972" says Barry Kinzie. "When Jim moved to Daleville about 1975, I taught him to bird. He was very smart with a high IQ and he learned quickly. I was with him for the second golden eagle ever observed at Harvey's Knob about 1977 and I was with him for the last Bewick's wren ever ID'd in the Roanoke Valley at Daleville Pond in 1978. He spent a lot of hours at Harvey's Knob. That's good for anybody."

"I miss Jim greatly," commented Linda Cory. "He was my birding mentor and invited me to join him on various bird finding missions. We looked for winter wrens (one of his favorites), warblers on Warbler Road and Chuck Will's widows in Botetourt County. On one of our last forays, he took me along to 'be his ears' to find blue-winged warblers. We were successful!"

Those of us who birded with Jim over the years know that he took his hobby very seriously but made it a fun learning experience for new birders. "How to Get There," "Some Ways to Remember Bird Songs and Calls," "Targeted Times of Arrival of Non-wintering Birds (Breeders and Migrants) to The Roanoke/Botetourt Area," and "Identification of Eastern Wood Warblers" were all written by Jim and are still valuable information tools used today.

Having previously birded in Costa Rica and Guatemala, in February of 1994, Jim, along with Mike Smith and two others traveled to Honduras. Adventures of this trip are recorded in his book, "Birding in Honduras: 1994," which is really interesting and fun to read.

Jim was very knowledgeable, funny and at times a little grumpy if things were not going his way. I'm sure a lot of us have birding stories about Jim. Our favorite was the time we were birding Solitude on Big Spring Day and locked ourselves out of the car. We bent a piece of rusty wire and tried, in vain, to open the door. After wringing our hands and watching Jim become really grumpy, John picked up a rather large rock and handed it to Jim. With a firm thrust he broke the window tossing glass all over the interior of the car. Jim opened the door, brushed the glass off the seats, climbed in and cheerfully said, "Let's go!"

Birding was Jim's hobby, but Mill Mountain Theatre was Jim's career. He spent more than 30 years with the theatre and many of them as director. After Jim's retirement, mounting debt forced the theatre to close in 2009. A sad time for Jim and all who loved it. At the time of his death, Jim was part of a group working passionately to bring Mill Mountain Theatre back to Roanoke.

A man of many talents, in addition to his work in the theatre and his hobby of bird watching, Jim taught at Monroe Junior High School, Patrick Henry High School and Hollins College (now Hollins University).

Jim was a great friend and a wonderful birding companion. We will miss him.

by Eunice & John Hudgins

BIRD BOOK AUCTION

AUCTIONS ENDS MARCH 10

Linda Cory and Eunice Hudgins have some bird books that belonged to Jim Ayers who passed away on February 2, 2011. As a fundraiser for the Roanoke Valley Bird Club,



we are having an auction. Email or phone Eunice (uvaau@aol.com / 540-389-4056) and bid on the books you desire. **The auction will end on March 10.** The highest bid for each book will

win. We suggest bidding in uneven amounts (such as \$9.43 instead of \$9.00). Winners will be notified and the books will be brought to the March 14th club meeting and you can pay at that time (or you can make other arrangements). The following are for sale:

- Life Histories of North American Wild Fowl (Part One) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Wild Fowl (Part Two) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Marsh Birds – Arthur Cleveland Bent

- Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey (Part One) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey (Part Two) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Jays, Crows and Titmice (Part One) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Jays, Crows and Titmice (Part Two) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers (Part One) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers (Part Two) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Nuthatches, Wrens, Thrashers, and Their Allies – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings, Towhees, Finches, Sparrows, and Allies (Part One) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings, Towhees, Finches, Sparrows, and Allies (Part Two) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Life Histories of North American Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings, Towhees, Finches, Sparrows, and Allies (Part Three) – Arthur Cleveland Bent
- Aves Venezolanas (Birds of Venezuela in Spanish) – Kathleen Deery de Phelps
- A Guide to The Birds of Panama (Second Edition) – Robert S. Ridgely and John A Gwynne
- A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica – F. Gary Stiles and Alexander F. Skutch
- National Geographic Society Field Guides to the Birds of North America (Second Edition)
- Birds of Europe – Bertel Bruun
- A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe (Third Edition) – Roger Tory Peterson
- South American Land Birds – John S. Dunning
- Birds of the World: A Check List (Fourth Edition) – James F. Clements
- The Eagle Watchers: Observing and Conserving Raptors around the World – Edited by Ruth E. Tingay and Todd E. Katzner
- Bird Study – Andrew J. Berger
- Birding in Honduras: 1994 (3 copies) – Jim Ayers

FOR SALE-John and Eunice Hudgins have the following items for sale:

- Bushnell Spacemaster II 60mm Prismatic Telescope w/ carrying case - \$75
- Flip-Lock Tripod, Model FL w/soft carrying case - \$25
- PackSeat folding tripod stool w/carrying case - \$15

If interested, call/e-mail 540-389-4056/uvaau@aol.com.

