VSO Annual Meeting
Farmville, Virginia  April 23-25, 2010

The Annual Meeting of the Virginia Society of Ornithology will be held April 23-25, 2010 in Farmville, an historic college town located in Virginia’s south-central piedmont. The meeting will be hosted by the Margaret H. Watson Bird Club and headquartered at the Hampton Inn, a staging location that provides easy access to all meeting activities. The meeting is being announced in this winter issue of the VSO Newsletter due to its early date. A shorter reminder will appear in the spring issue of the newsletter.

The meeting will feature a banquet, field trips, exhibits, vendors, a technical paper session, and the VSO’s annual business meeting. The banquet speaker is Ted Floyd, editor of the American Birding Association’s Birding magazine and author of the 2008 Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America. A bird-themed student art contest, to be judged by meeting attendees, is also being planned.

The south-central piedmont is one of the Commonwealth’s least birded areas; consequently less is known about its birdlife than that of the more popular mountain and coastal areas. This has earned the location the dubious moniker of “Virginia’s birding black hole,” but the Margaret Watson Bird Club has been working hard to change that. Fabulous field trips throughout Prince Edward and its neighboring counties will reveal the area’s birdlife secrets to all meeting attendees. Plan now to come and enjoy the birds of the “Heart of Virginia”!

Lodging/Headquarters/Meals
The Hampton Inn, 300 Sunchase Blvd., Farmville, will serve as headquarters for the meeting. Thirty rooms (20 doubles, 10 kings) have been reserved at a special rate of $109.00, plus tax. Reservations must be made by March 23 to obtain the special rate. When reserving, use the code “VSO.” The Hampton Inn can be contacted by phone at (434) 392-8163; Days Inn, (434) 392-6611; Super 8 Motel (434) 392-8196.

All meals, other than the banquet, are on your own. A list of conveniently located restaurants will be provided in the registration packet.

Registration
To register for the meeting and the banquet use the registration form on page 11, or download the form from the Margaret H. Watson Bird Club website, http://farmvillebirders.net/. The registration deadline is April 1.

Upon arrival registration packets can be picked up at the VSO table, located in the Sunchase Commons Room, across the street to the west of the Hampton Inn. You may also sign up for field trips at that time.

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President’s Message: ’Tis the Season

It’s that time of year, the holiday season, and that means it is also time for Christmas Bird Counts.

Fifty-two Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were conducted in Virginia during the 2008-2009 season. One of those was the Lynchburg count, which last year reached a milestone, its fiftieth consecutive year. The first Lynchburg Christmas Bird Count was conducted in 1927 by Ruskin Freer. The count was then conducted sporadically for the next three decades but has been conducted annually since 1959. The Lynchburg CBC is young compared to other counts. The first CBCs in North America were on Christmas Day in 1900 when twenty-five counts were conducted. A total of ninety species were found on those counts by twenty-seven participants. (So most of the counts that year were conducted by just one person). The first CBC in Virginia was the one conducted on Christmas Day in 1904 by Dr. William Caton. While looking out his dining room window in Accotink he saw six species. Lexington’s CBC, which began in 1922, is the oldest count still being conducted in Virginia. Blacksburg’s CBC has been conducted for the most consecutive years; it began in 1935.

Forty-five species were recorded on that 1959 Lynchburg CBC. Over the years, 93 species were added, bringing the cumulative number of species seen to 138. A Northern Shrike, seen in 1950, is the only species recorded prior to 1959 that has not been seen again in the past 50 years. Even the records for this single CBC provide important trend data for species such as Turkey Vulture with an average increase of 9.9 birds per year after a first decade low of one seen in 1959, 1966, and 1967 and 454 recorded in 2008; Eastern Bluebird with an average increase of 6.7 birds per year after a first decade low of none in 1961, 1966, and 1968 and 236 recorded in 2008; Loggerhead Shrike with an average decline of 0.1 birds per year after a first decade high of 5 seen in 1961 and none recorded since one in 2000; Northern Bobwhite with an average decline of 1.3 birds per year after a first decade high of 73 seen in 1966 and none recorded since two in 2006; and Eastern Meadowlark with an average decline of 1.1 birds per year after a first decade high of 56 seen in 1967 but with a surprising 17 recorded in 2008 after none in 2007. The last three species are among the ninety-six species identified with the greatest conservation needs in ‘Virginia’s Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy’ by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (2005).

The number of Lynchburg CBC participants grew from a low of eight in 1959 to a high of 53 in 1975. The dedication and hard work of many people have contributed to the longevity of this count. Seventeen people have participated in at least 25 Lynchburg CBCs. Myriam Moore and her daughter, Gene, did 44 Lynchburg counts each; they are the only ones who have participated in more than 40. Myriam also compiled the Lynchburg count for 24 of those years and participated on eight other CBCs in Virginia. Two birders have participated in an amazing number of CBCs across the state. At the end of the 2008-2009 season, Paul Sykes Jr. had done 205 counts in Virginia, beginning in 1953, and had compiled 126 of those. Charles ‘Mo’ Stevens participated in 220 CBCs in Virginia, beginning in 1943, and compiled 166 until his health forced him to retire in 2007.

Why do we conduct Christmas Bird Counts? According to Fred R. Scott in ‘The 1959-1960 Christmas Bird Counts in Virginia Summary’ in The Raven (Volume XXXI, Nos. 1 & 2, January-February 1960), “The chief value of Christmas counts is to show the variation of the common birds in an area over the years and to show trends in bird distribution and abundance that might not be noticed for a number of years.” The reason we conduct Christmas Bird Counts hasn’t changed and to collect this important data, CBCs need participants. Be inspired by and follow the example set by Mo Stevens and Paul Sykes. Several Virginia CBCs desperately need more volunteers. A list of Virginia CBCs organized by dates and with contact information is on the VSO Website at www.virginiabirds.net/cbc.html. Some CBCs are conducted late in December and into early January. It’s not too late help with a Virginia CBC this season.

I am grateful to Teta Kain for supplying several facts and figures related to CBCs in Virginia. Teta gathers and maintains CBC records for the entire state. She has summarized the state CBC results in ‘The Raven’ since the 1984-1985 CBC season and in ‘American Birds’ since the 1990-1991 season.
Jackson M. Abbott Conservation Award

A Call for Nominations

The Virginia Society of Ornithologists is seeking nominations for the 2010 Jackson M. Abbott Conservation Award, given for outstanding work in conserving Virginia’s birds and/or the state’s natural areas.

The Conservation Award was renamed the Jackson M. Abbott Conservation Award in 1989 based on Abbott’s extensive efforts to conserve Virginia’s birds. While the Fort Belvoir Christmas Bird Count was begun by him in 1941 and the 250-acre Jackson Abbott Wetland Refuge on Fort Belvoir is named after him, Abbott is best known for his work to protect Bald Eagles in Virginia, especially in the upper reaches of the Chesapeake Bay. Some previous recipients of the award include James W. Waggner for his efforts to establish the Occoquan Wildlife Refuge (1999), the Non-game Division of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for their work in promoting conservation and public awareness of birds (2002), and Henry Bashore for his leadership and conservation efforts on the Northern Neck (1987). In 2009 the award went to the Virginia Field Office of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and specifically to Karen Maynes, its recently retired Project Leader.

Nominations, including at least three letters of recommendation and a list of the nominee’s accomplishments, should be submitted to VSO’s Conservation Committee (chair: Stephen Eccles, stephendeccles@aol.com) no later than January 31, 2010. The Conservation Committee will make its recommendations to the VSO Board at the March meeting. The award will be presented at the 2010 Annual Meeting.

Call For Papers

VSO 2010 Annual Meeting

The Virginia Society of Ornithologists invites scientific presentations for its 2010 Annual Meeting to be held April 23-25 in Farmville. Oral presentations should be 15 minutes long, including time for questions. Static displays (such as posters) will also be accepted space permitting. Submissions will be reviewed by a selection committee and added to the program until the schedule or display space is full. Please submit the following information about your poster or presentation no later than March 15, 2010. Participants will be notified of their acceptance by March 22.

• Oral presentation or poster?
• Presenting author’s name
• Presenting author’s contact information: postal address, email address, phone number
• Institutional affiliation (if applicable)
• Names of co-authors (if applicable)
• Title of poster or oral presentation
• Brief abstract (250 word limit)
• Audio-visual needs (e.g. laptop and LCD projector, overhead projector, slide projector)

Send information (email preferred) to Mark Fink
Email: finkml@longwood.edu
Phone: 434-395-2749
FAX: 434-395-2652
Postal address:
Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences
Longwood University
201 High St.
Farmville, VA 23909
New Members
August 17, 2009–October 29, 2009

The VSO bids a warm welcome to the following new members:

- Lenny Bankster, Arlington
- John & Beth Elkins, Dogue
- Kay & Ralph Gibson, Grottoes
- Matt Hafner, St. Augustine, FL
- Robert L. McLemore, Maidens
- Lexi Meadows, Gretna
- Glenn & Alice Shelton, Chatham

New Local Chapter

The VSO would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest local chapter, the Southside Bird Club, in Danville, Virginia.

IBA Annual Report

The 2009 Virginia Important bird Area Annual Report is available at www.audubon.org/bird/iba/virginia

Peggy Spiegel Opengari Memorial Fund

The Roanoke Valley Bird Club has established the Peggy Spiegel Opengari Memorial Fund in honor of Peggy who died earlier this year. Peggy was instrumental in fostering the love of birds and birdwatching in many people, was a favorite speaker, and even organized birding trips for many of her friends and colleagues. People all around the state mourned her passing.

A small portion of the money donated this year will be used to install a memorial plaque in the new picnic table at Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center in Troutville. But the majority of the funds received this year, as well as any donations in future years, will be used for hummingbird research and conservation projects, as this tiny bird occupied a special place in Peggy’s heart.

Donations can be mailed to the Virginia Society of Ornithology, 1230 Viewmont Dr., Evington, VA 24550-2006 with a notation that they are for the Peggy Spiegel Opengari Memorial Fund.”

Adopt an Important Bird Area

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program is an international bird conservation program being implemented on every continent, with 48 states participating in the United States. The aim of the program is to identify a network of sites that are essential for sustaining naturally occurring populations of bird species, and to protect or manage these sites for the long-term conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. For a site to be recognized as an IBA it must meet criteria based on bird concentrations, threatened species, or species assemblages representative of priority habitats. The Virginia IBA Program was initiated in 2002 and has been making great progress toward greater protection of our state’s vulnerable bird species. Our first round of IBA identifications has produced 14 IBAs that span over 6.5% of our state’s very best bird habitat. It’s now time to work to protect these areas and you can help.

Local community members can play a vital role in furthering the goals of the IBA program. Through the Adopt an IBA initiative, a local group (such as an Audubon chapter, bird club, school group, etc.) adopts an IBA and participates as a group to further conservation, monitoring, or advocacy efforts on the site. Involvement can include organizing a monitoring effort, clean-up day, education program, or habitat improvement project or advocating for the IBA in the political arena. Adopting an IBA can help in the conservation of the site by raising awareness about the importance of the site and building a local group of constituents that care about it. For more information contact Mary Elfner, Virginia IBA Coordinator, 804 788 7660 or melfner@audubon.org.
VSO Winter Field Trip
North Carolina Outer Banks
February 5-7, 2010
Leaders: Bill Akers & Jerry Via
As in past, we are heading south of the (Virginia) border to enjoy the hopefully milder climate of the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Back by popular demand is an optional Friday pelagic trip out of Hatteras and a Sunday visit to Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.

Lodging: The Comfort Inn (formerly Clarion Inn) at Kill Devil Hills will be the trip headquarters. The special VSO room rate is $62 for oceanfront and $57 for street side plus tax (currently 12%). Ocean front rooms are available on a first come, first served basis. Contact information for the hotel is: 1601 S. Virginia Dare Trail, P.O. Box 308, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27949; Phone: 252 441-6333; fax 252 441-7779. Reservations must be made by January 16 to get the special VSO rate.

Meals are on your own. NEW! A complimentary breakfast buffet breakfast is now included with your stay, beginning at 6:30 AM. You can select from coffee, juice, fruit, cereal, Danish, hard-boiled eggs, and make-your-own waffles. Participants should bring lunch provisions for Saturday. For dinner there are many fine restaurants in the area.

Program: A program of events and announcements will be available at the front desk on Friday morning.

Friday: VSO Pelagic Trip: See details below.

Friday Night: An evening orientation and slide program will be presented at 8:30 PM in the conference room near the lobby.

Saturday: All day will be spent visiting the impoundments of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge and the beaches of Cape Hatteras National Seashore. The generally milder climate and the proximity of the Gulf Stream make for an interesting combination of wintering waterfowl, shorebirds, ocean birds and sometimes whales. Participants may be divided into smaller groups, but every group will visit all areas. Participants should bring lunch.

Saturday Evening: There will be a tally at 6:00 PM in the VSO conference room at the hotel.

Sunday Morning: We’ll travel in caravan to Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. The trip will depart from the hotel at 8:00 AM, giving those wishing to continue straight home from the field trip time to check out of their rooms.

Come prepared for variable weather, lots of birds and a good time. If you have any questions, contact Bill Akers at 540 951-7692 or bill.akersj@comcast.net or Meredith Bell at 804 642-2197 or merandlee@cox.net.

VSO Pelagic Trip
with Brian Patteson
Friday – February 5, 2010
Brian Patteson has offered to run a pelagic trip for VSO members again this year as an early extension of the Outer Banks weekend. The minimum number of participants required for the trip is 10 (maximum of 20), and the special VSO rate is $150 per person. If fewer than 10 VSO members register, the trip will be opened to non-members. Anyone who is not a VSO member can join using the registration form on the back page of this newsletter. In case of inclement weather on Friday, participants will be able to reschedule for Brian’s regular trip on Saturday or his Sunday weather date depending on available space.

Join Brian and his crew aboard the Stormy Petrel II for a pelagic trip to look for winter seabirds. The waters off Cape Hatteras are even better than those off Virginia for Great Skua, Red Phalarope, and Razorbill. There is also a good chance to see Northern Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Little Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Dovekie, and Atlantic Puffin. Northern Gannets are common to abundant here, and the chumming usually attracts many gulls including Lesser-Black-backed, and sometimes Iceland, Glaucous, Thayer’s, and California. Bottlenose Dolphins are usually seen in good numbers, and there is a chance to see Loggerhead Sea Turtles and Humpback Whales. Basking Sharks and the endangered Northern Right Whale are sometimes seen. Many of these birds and animals can be found just a few miles offshore, in contrast to the Virginia Capes where winter trips typically range 60 or more miles offshore. The Stormy Petrel II has a full walk around layout as well as a heated cabin, high railings, and excellent stability. Warm clothing and a two piece rain suit are nevertheless essential for these trips. A selection of photos from past winter trips off Cape Hatteras can be seen at www.seabirding.com/Winter%20Gallery.htm. The trip will begin at 6:00 AM at either Hatteras, NC or Wanchese, NC. (Directions will be sent to via email with trip confirmation). Those wishing to stay at the Comfort Inn North Oceanfront in Kill Devil Hills prior to the trip, will receive the special VSO rate.

To register: Contact Brian Patteson at patteson1@embarqmail.com or by mail, and send your payment of $150 (Checks made payable to Brian Patteson, Inc.) to Brian Patteson, P.O. Box 772, Hatteras, NC 27943. Early registration is encouraged because last year's trip was sold out.
For many of us our passion for birds and birding began as children. Someone showed us a brilliant Northern Cardinal or an elegant Great Blue Heron and we were hooked. As important as the first aha moment is, further encouragement for a child to pursue his or her interest is vital. We in the VSO can play the dual roles of introducing birds, and other aspects of the natural world, to young people and providing a variety of opportunities for them to build on their interest. Here are the stories of four VSO members who have been doing just that. They hope that these examples of working with young people will inspire others to create their own programs and are happy to talk further with anyone who would like to learn more about what they do.

Scott Jackson-Ricketts, with the Blue Ridge Birders Club, volunteers in two elementary schools, one in Grayson County, the other in Ashe County, NC. Through various gifts and donations the club has accumulated enough binoculars and field guides to support their outings and programs. They have instituted Cornell’s Classroom Feeder Watch, and have donated feeders, seed and habitat plantings. Bluebird boxes with baffles stand around the edges of one of the schools. Many of the club members are retired teachers who bring a variety of skills and approaches to these activities. The club has also sponsored field trips, the most ambitious of which were to Rural Retreat Lake and the Carolina Raptor Center. Last year Jackson-Ricketts co-founded the Blue Ridge Discovery Center, an outdoor educational center that represents the entire Blue Ridge Ecoregion. His thoughts on outdoor education are on page 7 of this issue. For more information contact Scott Jackson-Ricketts at scottjr@ls.net

“No child left inside” is the mantra of Richmond resident, Mary Arginteanu who works with a coalition of the Richmond Audubon Society, Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists. Their focus is on children from poor neighborhoods. The group will do anything that gets the kids excited about the outdoors and meets the goals of their teachers and caretakers. This includes gardening activities, scavenger hunts, kayaking, and rock climbing. Sometimes they sneak in birding with bird feeders or bird identification activities. Their goal is to establish long-term relationships with their youth partners. The group will do anything that gets the kids excited about the outdoors and meets the goals of their teachers and caretakers. This includes gardening activities, scavenger hunts, kayaking, and rock climbing. Sometimes they sneak in birding with bird feeders or bird identification activities. Their goal is to establish long-term relationships with their youth partners. Currently they work intensely with two elementary schools and a summer day camp. The Richmond Audubon Society has been generous with seed money that helped leverage small grants from other groups including a local civic association and the Virginia Environmental Endowment. For more information contact Mary Arginteanu at mary.arginteanu@gmail.com

Keith Carson with the Bath-Highland Bird Club has been working with two Bath County elementary schools since September 2008. Each school received a variety of feeders and bird houses, depending on the teachers’ requests. In the spring Carson set up bluebird houses at one of the schools and gave a short tutorial about the Virginia Bluebird Society and their bluebird monitoring protocols. At one of the schools he presented a program about the birds of Highland County to several different grades. He has also given talks on the birds of Highland County to the local chapter of the Retired Educators Association.

Jennifer Gaden lives in the Charlottesville area. The Monticello Bird Club sponsors a program that she initiated several years ago for individual classrooms. Gaden works with one elementary school in Charlottesville and two in Albemarle County. The club purchases feeders, bird baths, books, binoculars and any equipment that the teachers request. At the beginning of the year Gaden gives a presentation on the birds that the children can expect to see at the feeders and around the school grounds. Emphasis is on adaptations that can be observed as they watch the birds in action. Gaden offers a list of projects that the children can carry out involving their observations. She also offers field trips on the school grounds or nearby parks. For more information contact Jennifer Gaden jjgaden@embarqmail.com

~Jennifer Gaden
Additional Thoughts from Scott Jackson-Ricketts

Several years ago the Blue Ridge Birders committed to an ambitious educational outreach program within our rural counties of Grayson, VA. and Ashe, NC. We focused on second and third grades, partially because of the willing teachers, but also because we felt it a good age to spark an interest in birds and the outdoors. Success of such an endeavor involves several ingredients: a group of dedicated volunteers from the community, enthusiastic support from within the school and time and patience. The basic approach we have taken includes presentations in the school, guided outings, and support for curriculum-based programs such as Cornell’s Feeder Watch. We have managed to adapt everything we have done to Standard of Learning guidelines, which for better or worse, is fairly important.

Guiding kids in the outdoors contains huge rewards for all, especially if there are enough guides on hand. The ratio that works best is no more than five young people per guide. The guides do not need to be experts. Having on hand some field guides is a good idea, but the experience of paying attention is the best approach, with identifying each discovered thing coming later. Field guides and binoculars can become distractions, especially with younger children. If binoculars are to be utilized, it is prudent to give the kids a how to use binoculars session before ever heading into the field. If there are enough binoculars for everyone in a class or group, each person should have theirs tuned to their eyes before hand, as well.

Children are naturally curious. Just because we are birders does not mean we can’t explore all aspects of the outdoors while searching for birds. I highly recommend that as guides we all take the time to observe and discover in the moment what is at hand. This requires many kinds of field guides to help answer the questions. I also suggest that kids take sketch pads and pencils into the field. No one has to be an artist. This is about documentation and committing to memory the things discovered.

Keeping close to the neighborhood has its advantages. We have taken field trips to places far away, as well as stayed on the campus and within the immediate area. To take a closer look at what’s in our own backyard can be even more important to understanding the details.

One more thing, include the parents when possible.

~Scott Jackson-Ricketts
VSO Member and Secretary of the Blue Ridge Birders Club and the Blue Ridge Discovery Center. scottjr@ls.net

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**Second Reminder**

**Call for Applications**

**J. J. Murray Research Award**

*Deadline January 29, 2010*

This annual $1000 student research grant is one of the ways in which the VSO supports the study of Virginia avifauna. Up to two awards will again be granted in 2010 due to the generosity of the Northern Neck Audubon Society in funding a matching award.

**Criteria and eligibility:** The award is designed to promote graduate and undergraduate research which must consist of current or projected field studies on Virginia birds. Proposals will be judged for their scientific merit and the likelihood that the work will make a meaning contribution to our understanding of Virginia avifauna. Upon completion of the research, the recipient will be asked to present the results at a VSO annual meeting and are encouraged to publish the results in an appropriate journal. The recipient will also be awarded a one-year membership in the VSO.

**Application procedures:** Proposals should be of a reasonable length. If the proposal is longer than 15 pages it must include a summary of no more than two pages. Submissions will be evaluated by the VSO and must be received by January 29, 2010. If the research is part of a degree program, students should include the name of the institution and department, the degree they are working towards, and the name of their academic or research advisor. Each proposal should include a letter from the student’s academic advisor verifying that the applicant is a student in good standing, and that he/she is receiving the advisor’s support for this project. Both proposals and letters of reference should be submitted electronically as Word files, although they can be submitted separately. Applicants will be notified of the results by April 2, 2010. Please send proposals or requests for information to:

Gene Sattler
gsattler@liberty.edu
Department of Biology & Chemistry
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd.
Lynchburg, VA 24502
The weather was beautiful for the VSO Chincoteague field trip held September 11-13. The 48 participants tallied 124 species. Jerry Via and Bill Akers did their usual outstanding job with an excellent educational program, “To Molt or Not to Molt”, Friday evening and great guiding on the field trips.

High water levels from a heavy rain just before the weekend produced an abundance of waterfowl, with Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, and American Black Duck seen in Snow Goose Pool. A number of Black Terns seen in that same location performing their classic flight maneuvers was a trip highlight. With the high water, shorebirds had limited habitat but at the east end of Swan Cove pool there was a flock of Willets, along with more than 50 Black Skimmers, several Marbled Godwits and a Hudsonian Godwit. Thirteen species of warblers were identified, many of them observed on the Woodland Trail.

The birding and biking group got to see Clapper Rails out in the open in the marshy area just before the bridge and then had great views of an immature Peregrine Falcon perched on a dead tree towards the end of the Wildlife Loop.

Thanks to Elisa Enders for her contributions to this report.

~Meredith Bell, Field Trip Co-chair

Species List

- Canada Goose
- Wood Duck
- Gadwall
- American Black Duck
- Mallard
- Blue-winged Teal
- Northern Shoveler
- Northern Pintail
- Green-winged Teal
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Northern Bobwhite
- Brown Pelican
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Blue Heron
- Great Egret
- Snowy Egret
- Little Blue Heron
- Tricolored Heron
- Cattle Egret
- Green Heron
- Black-crowned Night-Heron
- White Ibis
- Glossy Ibis
- Black Vulture
- Turkey Vulture
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Northern Harrier
- Cooper’s Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Merlin
- Peregrine Falcon
- Clapper Rail
- Black-bellied Plover
- Semipalmated Plover

- Killdeer
- American Oystercatcher
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Willet
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Whimbrel
- Hudsonian Godwit
- Marbled Godwit
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Sanderling
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- Pectoral Sandpiper
- Stilt Sandpiper
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Wilson’s Snipe
- Laughing Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Lesser Black-backed Gull
- Great Black-backed Gull
- Least Tern
- Gull-billed Tern
- Caspian Tern
- Black Tern
- Common Tern
- Forster’s Tern
- Royal Tern
- Sandwich Tern
- Black Skimmer
- Rock Pigeon
- Mourning Dove
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Common Nighthawk
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird

- Belted Kingfisher
- Downy Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- Eastern Wood-Pewee
- Great Crested Flycatcher
- Eastern Kingbird
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Fish Crow
- Purple Martin
- Tree Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- Carolina Chickadee
- Brown-headed Nuthatch
- Carolina Wren
- Marsh Wren
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
- Eastern Bluebird
- American Robin
- Northern Mockingbird
- Brown Thrasher
- European Starling
- Northern Parula
- Yellow Warbler
- Magnolia Warbler
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Pine Warbler
- Prairie Warbler
- Black-and-white Warbler
- American Redstart
- Ovenbird
- Common Yellowthroat
- Wilson’s Warbler

- Yellow-breasted Chat
- Summer Tanager
- Scarlet Tanager
- Chipping Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- Northern Cardinal
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Blue Grosbeak
- Indigo Bunting
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Common Grackle
- Boat-tailed Grackle
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Baltimore Oriole
- House Finch
- American Goldfinch
- House Sparrow

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VSO Anual Meeting

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SCHEDULE

Friday, April 23
1:30 – 8:00 Registration
2:00 – 8:00 Exhibits and Vendors Open
3:00 Early Bird Field Trip to Wilck's Lake
8:00 VSO Business Meeting & trip Preview
9:00 Piedmont Owls and Nightjars Field Trip

Saturday, April 24
6:30 – 8:00 Field trips depart
10:00 – 1:00 Late Registration
12:00 – 5:00 Exhibits Open
1:30 – 4:00 Technical Paper Session
5:00 Reception with Cash Bar
6:30 Banquet with Speaker
8:30 Piedmont Owls and Nightjars Field Trip

Sunday, April 25
6:30 – 8:00 Field Trips Depart
12:00 End of Meeting

Regional Annotated Checklist

The Margaret H. Watson Bird Club will publish the second edition of Birds of Virginia's South-Central Piedmont: An Annotated Checklist for Prince Edward and Surrounding Counties in time for the annual meeting. In this attractive spiral-bound volume, the club has compiled all known bird records for the eight counties surrounding Farmville. For each species, it lists peak counts, arrival and departure dates, and breeding status in each county. If you purchase a copy when you register using the meeting registration form, your copy will be waiting for you in your registration packet.

Banquet

The banquet and program Saturday night will be held at Longwood University on the lower floor of Dorrill Dining Hall. The reception will begin with a cash bar at 5:00 PM, followed by a buffet-style banquet to be held in the Lewis-Nance complex. The after-dinner program will feature Ted Floyd, editor of Birding, and author of the 2008 Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America.

Exhibits

Space for exhibits will be available in the Sunchase Commons Room, just across the street from the Hampton Inn. Space is limited and should be reserved early. The charge for vendors is $10. Exhibitors should plan to bring their own tables and chairs. To reserve space contact Mark Jacobs at 434 248-9470 or mtj@wildblue.net.

Art Contest

Entries for a student art contest featuring birds will be hanging in the lower level of the Longwood Center for the Visual Arts. VSO members are invited to drop by on Friday or Saturday afternoon to vote for their favorite entry in three separate age groups: grades 1–4, 5–7, and 8–12. Prizes will be awarded to the winners in each age group.

FIELD TRIPS

The rural nature of the Farmville area affords abundant opportunities to see a wide variety of birds. Field trips have been carefully planned to cover a range of habitats and locations of historical interest. All field trips are free with meeting registration.

Bear Creek Lake SP and Cumberland State Forest

Bear Creek State Park, nestled in the heart of Cumberland State Forest, is the perfect getaway for an outdoor enthusiast. During the Great Depression one-hundred members of the Civilian Conservation Corps built the lake and two pavilions. Habitat consists of lakes, wetlands, meadows, and upland and lowland forest. Bald Eagle, Kentucky Warbler and Willow Flycatcher have been recorded here. Located 20 miles north of Farmville in Cumberland County, travel time approximately 30 minutes.

Briery Creek and Sandy Creek Reservoirs

Briery Creek Lake is an 845-acre lake owned by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, located within the Briery Creek Wildlife Management Area. Sandy River Reservoir is a 740-acre lake owned by Prince Edward County and managed by DGIF. Large areas of standing timber were left in both lakes to provide habitat for fish and for birds requiring perches or nesting sites over the lake. Habitat consists of large open expanses of water, sheltered coves, shrubby shorelines, forests, and meadows. Birds of interest may include waterfowl, Bald Eagle, Red Headed Woodpecker, and a wide variety of warblers, sparrows, vireos and flycatchers. Located within 10 miles of Farmville, travel time 15 minutes.

Darlington Heights CBC Area

The Margaret Watson Bird Club began in 1967 as the Spring Creek Bird Club when a group of friends living in Darlington Heights gathered to enjoy each other's company and learn more about birds. Their first recorded activity was a small Christmas Count held on January 1, 1968. Since then the Darlington Heights Fire Department has been the center of 32 Christmas Bird Counts and several spring counts. Habitat consists of small lakes, wetlands, fields, meadows, and forest, and a reclaimed kyanite mine. There is a Great Blue Heron rookery, and the possibility of grassland birds such as Dickcissel and Bobolink. Located 15 miles west of Farmville in Prince Edward County, travel time approximately 20 minutes.

Dick Cross WMA and Kerr Reservoir (Sunday only)

Dick Cross Wildlife Management Area is located in Mecklenburg County, along the north side of the Roanoke River just below the John H. Kerr Dam. The area's 1,400 acres are primarily open upland, maintained as fallow fields or cultivated to benefit wildlife. Farming techniques on the area are modified to enhance wildlife habitat and old fields containing native vegetation are encouraged and maintained by diskimg and prescribed burning. A notable exception is the nearly

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300 acres of bottomland along Allen Creek and the Roanoke River where numerous wetland impoundments totaling about 165 acres are managed for waterfowl. Located 50 miles south of Farmville, travel time 1 hour and 15 minutes.

**High Bridge Trail State Park and Smith Farm**
High Bridge Trail State Park, Virginia’s thirty-fourth and newest State Park, is a multi-use trail ideally suited for hiking, bicycling, and birdwatching. Built along a former N&W Railroad line, its centerpiece is the majestic High Bridge, which is more than 2,400 feet long and 160 feet above the Appomattox River. The bridge was built in 1853 as part of the South Side Railroad. So far, 16 miles of the linear park’s 34 miles are open to the public. The Smith farm lies adjacent to High Bridge and provides additional birding habitat and a view of the bridge. Habitat consists of fields, meadows, river, wetlands and forest. A variety of warblers, vireos, sparrows and other passerines can be expected. Located just north of Farmville, travel time approximately 10 minutes.

**Holliday Lake State Park and Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest**
Located in the heart of Virginia’s newest and largest National Audubon Society Important Bird Area, Holliday Lake offers many opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. Park features include a 150-acre lake, extensive hiking trials, a large picnic area, camping areas, and boat rentals. It also is just minutes from the famous Appomattox Court House National Historical Park where Lee surrendered to Grant in April 1865. Habitat consists of the lake, meadows, creeks, wetlands and emergent and mature forest. Birds of interest may include Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Prairie Warbler, Field Sparrow, and Red-headed Woodpecker. Located 25 miles northwest of Farmville, travel time approximately 30 minutes.

**Red Hill Plantation and Patrick Henry National Memorial**
Red Hill is the final home and resting place of Patrick Henry, the orator and revolutionist whose words inspired his countrymen’s struggle for independence. Red Hill Plantation lies adjacent to the Staunton River and Falling River. Habitat consists of fields, meadows, river, wetlands and 750 acres of managed forest. Birds of interest may include Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Chat, Grasshopper Sparrow, Yellow-throated Warbler, and many other migrants. Located about 45 miles west of Farmville, travel time approximately 60 minutes.

**Staunton River Battlefield State Park**
Site of the Battle of Staunton River Bridge where a rag tag group of old men and boys beat the odds and held a bridge of strategic importance to General Lee’s army on June 25, 1864, the park is a result of a unique partnership between Virginia State Parks and Dominion Virginia Power and features a 3,800 square-foot visitor center, battlefield exhibits, Civil War earthworks, nature walking trails, wildlife observation towers, and prehistoric Native American artifacts. Habitat consists of fields, meadows, river, a large man-made wetland and forest. Birds of interest may include Red-headed Woodpecker, Wood Duck, Savannah Sparrow, and Bald Eagle. Mississippi Kite is possible at this location. Located 45 miles southwest of Farmville, travel time approximately 60 minutes.

**Twin Lakes State Park**
The land for the park was initially bought from struggling farmers by the federal government during the Great Depression. Two parks, Goodwin Lake and Prince Edward Lake, were founded in 1939 and until the early 1960s were run as two racially segregated parks. The parks merged into one in 1976, and the site was renamed Twin Lakes State Park in 1986. A series of nature trails loop around both lakes providing access to several different habitats consisting of the lakes, small meadows, creeks, wetlands and mature forest. Birds of interest may include Yellow-throated Vireo, Wood Duck, Spotted Sandpiper, and many migratory species. Located 15 miles southeast of Farmville, travel time approximately 20 minutes.

**Wilck’s Lake**
Wilck’s Lake is a 150-acre natural area, including a 55-acre lake, managed and owned by the Town of Farmville with a two-mile walking trail that circumnavigates the lake and provides abundant opportunities for birding and wildlife watching. Over half of the trail is under a canopy of trees and passes through various marsh, swamp, and river habitats. Attractions include a Great Blue Heron rookery, a robust breeding population of Prothonotary Warblers right alongside the trail, ducks, coots, herons, kingfishers, Osprey, various songbirds and other wildlife such as muskrat, beaver, otter, mink, raccoon, white-tail deer, red and gray fox, rabbit, gray squirrel, black rat snake, northern water snake and garter snake. Located within the town of Farmville, travel time approximately five minutes.

**Piedmont Owls and Nightjars**
Both Friday and Saturday night after other scheduled activities, a short field trip will be offered driving back roads near Farmville, listening for owls and nightjars. Whip-poor-will, Chuck-wills-widow, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl and Screech Owl are all possible.

**2010 Annual Meeting Call for Papers**
See Call for Papers on page 3 of this Newsletter.
Virginia Society of Ornithology
2010 Annual Meeting Registration Form

This form may be used for registration of one or two participants.

Name 1: ____________________________________________________________

Name 2: ____________________________________________________________

Mailing address: ______________________________________________________

Home phone: _________________________________________________________

Secondary phone (e.g., cell or work): ____________________________________

Email address: ________________________________________________________

Registration fee: Number (1 or 2) ____ X $40.00 = ______________

Saturday evening banquet: Number (1 or 2) ____ X $30.00 = ____________

* Birds of Virginia’s South-Central Piedmont: An Annotated
  Checklist for Prince Edward and Surrounding Counties

  Number of checklists ____ X $15.00 = ______________

  Total payment = ______________

Please make check payable to the Margaret Watson Bird Club. Mail completed form and check
to Mrs. Deanna Fehrler, MWBC Treasurer, 188 Farmville Lake Road, Farmville, VA 23901.

Your registration form must be received by April 1, 2010,
to guarantee registration for catered meal.

Other important notes:

- Registration fee includes all field trips and meeting activities except the banquet.
- Participants are responsible for their own lodging. A limited number of rooms are available at a reduced rate at Farmville’s Hampton Inn. Don’t forget to make reservations by March 23!
- Please visit our website for news and updates: www.farmvillebirders.net.
The Virginia Society of Ornithology

Mrs. John H. Dalmas
1230 Viewmont Dr.
Evington, VA 24550-2006

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Keith Carson, Highland County

If label reads “PAID THROUGH 09” it is time to renew

VSO Sales

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<td>Virginia's Birdlife: An Annotated Checklist</td>
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Total Merchandise: 

Total for Membership and Sales: 

Please make checks payable to VSO and return form and remittance to:

Virginia Society of Ornithology
1230 Viewmont Drive
Evington, VA 24550-2006