REMINDER

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

The full VSO annual meeting announcement was carried in the winter issue of this newsletter because of the early date of the meeting. Key information is recapitulated below. More details can be found at www.farmvillebirders.net.

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 will feature a banquet, field trips, exhibits, vendors, a technical paper session, and the VSO's business meeting.

Lodging/Headquarters/Meals
The Hampton Inn in Farmville, will serve as headquarters for the meeting. For reservations contact 434-392-8826. Other lodging options include the Comfort Inn, 434 392-8163; Days Inn, 434 392-6611; and 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 7 or download the form from the Margaret H. Watson Bird Club website, http://www.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.

SCHEDULE
Friday, April 23
1:30 - 8:00 PM  Registration
2:00 - 8:00 PM  Exhibits and Vendors Open
3:00 PM  Early Bird Field Trip to Wilke's Lake
8:00 PM  VSO Business Meeting & Preview of Field Trips
9:00 PM  Piedmont Owls and Nightjars Field Trip

Saturday, April 24
6:30 - 8:00 AM  Field trips depart
10:00 - 1:00  Late Registration
12:00 - 5:00  Exhibits Open
1:50 - 4:00  Technical Paper Session
5:00 PM  Reception with Cash Bar
6:30 PM  Banquet with Speaker
8:30 PM  Piedmont Owls and Nightjars Field Trip

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

Officer and Board of Director Nominees
At the 2010 VSO annual meeting the membership will vote to elect the society’s officers and three members of the board of directors. Officers are elected annually; board members every three years. Terms run from July 1 to June 30 each year.

The nominating committee will present the following slate to the general membership at the Annual Meeting business session. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted at that time.

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Then the conversation shifted to things that the VSO already does and should continue to do, things the VSO could be doing better, and things the VSO is not currently doing but should consider. The items discussed in these three areas were:

Things to Continue Doing – giving grants and awards; publishing the newsletter, Virginia Birds, The Raven, an annual speaker's directory, Virginia’s Birdlife: An Annotated Checklist, and other publications; conducting forays and field trips; maintaining the Website, VA-Bird listserv, and Virginia eBird; supporting the Virginia Avian Records Committee (VARCOM); publicizing and documenting Christmas Bird Counts in Virginia; holding annual meetings for members; supporting education projects; conducting board meetings; exhibiting at appropriate events in the state; contributing to research about Virginia bird species; supporting Important Bird Areas in Virginia; serving as a communications/networking clearinghouse; holding paper sessions; collecting funds for conservation projects; supporting other conservation groups; establishing a birding ethics policy; and issuing conservation email alerts.

Things that the VSO Could be Doing Better – promoting the VSO with local chapters; being more visible to local bird clubs/chapters; making more use of the annual meeting for local chapter presidents to network; finding out more about what local chapters want from the VSO; publishing The Raven on schedule; reconsidering the makeup of the VSO board (size, voting members, committee chairs, etc.); conducting more field trips outside of the state and/or daytrips; educating birders about submitting sightings to VARCOM; disseminating educational materials to schools; reaching out to younger birders; learning more about the benefit received from VSO grant or award recipients after their research is completed; distributing more VSO publications electronically.

Things the VSO is not Doing but Should Consider Doing – getting our message out to the general public; having a physical presence, e.g., a refuge, park, center, or other property; conducting a new Breeding Bird Atlas (the last one was done in the late 1980s); publicizing the organizations accomplishments; fundraising; taking advantage of social networking and other communication technology; doing more educational outreach; having a paid staff; distributing more publications to the public; advertising/marketing; providing added benefits to members; getting VSO information brochures to master nat-
Conservation Corner

Safeguarding Virginia’s Wildlife from Climatic Change

Recently, Americans have spent a lot of time talking about climate change. We have debated the validity of the data, whether climate change is a natural occurrence or man-made event, how much time we have before tragedy strikes, and how much it will cost us to adapt. Some would like to see our civilization completely overhauled while others believe climate change is a fraud and should be ignored. There is remarkably little middle ground within current public debate. While I can respect this discussion as part of our democratic process, from a wildlife management perspective, it is not terribly helpful or informative.

As wildlife managers, we don’t always have the luxury of engaging in the academic debates. The people of Virginia rely upon us to conserve and manage their wildlife resources. When it comes to climate change, we feel we must be prudent. We do that by hoping for the best while planning for the worst. Rising temperatures could completely change the nature of our mountain habitats and impact everything from Snowshoe Hares and Brook Trout to Shenandoah salamanders and Red Crossbills. In the coastal areas important marsh, estuary, and beach habitats could be lost to sea level rise, which would impact scores of species such as Black Rails, Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetles, and Greater Scaups. It is difficult to guess how wildlife and habitats will be impacted in the coastal plain, the piedmont, or our valleys. While the impacts could be dramatic, there are simple steps we can take to help mitigate those impacts. Last October, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Virginia Conservation Network completed an 18-month effort to supplement Virginia’s Wildlife Action Plan with strategies to address climate change. This project was funded in part by Wildlife Conservation Society’s Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The report, Virginia’s Strategy for Safeguarding Species of Greatest Conservation Need from the Effects of Climate Change, examines climate issues and identifies three sets of actions that will help conserve Virginia’s wildlife. The first set of actions involves conserving populations and their habitats because healthy populations in healthy habitats will be more capable of adapting to changing conditions. There are several things we can do to give our wildlife every chance to adapt. We can conserve and restore our aquatic, riparian, grassland, and savannah habitats which provide homes to hundreds of species. We can maintain large connected habitats that will help species as they respond to warming temperatures by moving to higher elevations and latitudes. Some species, like Black Banded Sunfish, can be raised in captivity and restored to former habitats.

Secondly, we have serious research questions that need to be answered if we are to develop a long term strategy for climate change. We need a better idea of how Virginia’s climate and landscape will change over the next 100 years and need to understand how those changes will affect our wildlife and their habitats. We need a better understanding of public attitudes about management actions we can take to address the impacts of climate change. We need to determine how to work more closely with others that are trying to prepare our agricultural, industrial, transportation, economic, and municipal systems for the coming impacts of climate change.

Finally, Virginia’s climate strategy for wildlife discusses the need for public outreach. The strategy focuses on actions we can take to safeguard our wildlife resources. However, these are not the only valuable ideas. Virginia has a vibrant and resourceful conservation community. The outreach efforts within the climate change strategy will, hopefully, inspire and motivate Virginians to create and implement new ideas that will benefit both our wildlife and human communities.

In the political realm, climate change is daunting and divisive. Virginia’s strategy for Safeguarding Species of Greatest Conservation Need from the Effects of Climate Change was written to help Virginians understand that there are common sense solutions that we can begin implementing today that will benefit both our wildlife and our communities. Often, getting started is the hardest part.

For more information please visit:

National Wildlife Federation: www.nwf.org/wildlifeandglobalwarming
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries: www.bewildvirginia.org
Virginia Conservation Network: www.vcnva.org

~Chris Burkett
Wildlife Action Plan Coordinator
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

~Austin Kane
Policy Specialist
National Wildlife Federation.
President's Message: 2010 Priorities

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uralist groups, native plant organizations and birding stores in
the state; promoting land conservation efforts; establishing
systems to achieve our purposes; connecting with academic
institutions in the state; establishing a general research grant
fund; awarding honorary memberships to distinguished
ornithologists/professionals in the state; establishing more
links with wildlife refuges, parks, forests, and government
wildlife agencies located in the state.

Once all of these ideas about things the VSO does, could do
better, or could start doing were on the table, the group
organized and prioritized them. Overwhelmingly, the board
thought we should concentrate on two things – local chapter
outreach and marketing the VSO. The board decided to use
social networking as a marketing tool by immediately estab-
lishing the organization on Facebook. Vice president, Andrew
Dolby, took the initiative to do this shortly after the meeting.

See New and Noteworthy on page 5 for more information
about Facebook. If you haven’t already done so, become a
VSO Facebook fan to keep up with what is going on everyday
with the VSO and its ‘fans.’

The board also decided to start reaching out to local chapters
by holding a networking gathering for local chapter presidents
at the annual meeting in Farmville this spring. Plans aren’t
finalized but may include informing clubs about services and
resources available to local chapters from the VSO, asking
clubs what else the VSO could do for them, and including
local chapter representatives at VSO board meetings. Club
presidents will be contacted with more details.

With regard to marketing the VSO, board members think that
the current VSO membership brochure is geared to people
who already know something about the VSO. Some board
members volunteered to draft a new VSO brochure aimed at
a more general audience. This new brochure might be distrib-
uted more widely through willing wildlife refuges, parks,
birding stores, and like-minded organizations throughout the
state.

If you had been at this meeting, what would you have agreed
or disagreed with or added to the discussion? What should the
board be concentrating on? Has the VSO lost sight of its pri-
mary focus; if so what is that? What should be the VSO’s
immediate and long-term priorities? If something needs to be
done differently, how should it be done? If something new
needs to be done, what is it? Please let me know your thoughts
on what the VSO’s priorities and direction should be in 2010
and beyond. You can contact me by email at
Bruno@lynchburg.edu or by U.S. mail at 1012 Harrods Court,
Lynchburg, VA 24503. The VSO board will continue to
address these topics and we welcome your input.

Officer and
Board of Director Nominees

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Officers

President: Rexanne Bruno, Lynchburg
Vice President: Andrew Dolby, Fredericksburg
Secretary: Alyce Quinn, Roanoke
Treasurer: Barbara “Sue” Thrasher, Lynchburg
Raven Editor: Wes Brown, Parksley (Eastern Shore)
Newsletter Editors: Linda Fields and Alan Schreck, Arlington
Membership Secretary: Thelma Dalmas, Evington

Board of Directors Terms Ending 2013

Elisa Enders, Portsmouth
David Hannah, Charlottesville
Larry Meade, Vienna

Thanks to the nominating committee – Jenny Gaden, Arun
Bose, and Bob Riggs.

David Spears
Nominating Committee Chair

Meet the Board of Director Nominees

Elisa Enders
Elisa is based in Portsmouth. She is an enthusiastic field
observer, and participates in regional Christmas Bird Counts,
VSO Forays, and other field trips. In addition, she enjoys
birding other locales in the continental U.S.

David Hannah
David grew up in North Carolina and has lived in Char-
lottesville since 1998. He began birding when he took an
ornithology class at the University of Florida in 1990. He
enjoys spring migration in the Blue Ridge Mountains and has
been conservation director of Wild Virginia since November,
2006.

Larry Meade
Larry is a lifetime resident of Northern Virginia and currently
lives in Vienna. He especially enjoys pelagic trips and birding
the Eastern Shore. He has also binned in Arizona, Utah,
Texas, and Washington State. Larry, an avid nature photogra-
pher, is currently vice president for programs for the
Northern Virginia Bird Club. He often leads field trips for
local organizations.
New Members

October 30, 2009–January 22, 2010

The VSO bids welcome to the following new members:
Candy Andrzejewski, Ferrum
Fred & Lorelei Bourque, Locust Dale
L.L. Cole/C.J. Schrader, Williamsburg
Tiffany Corsello, King George
Rick & Pamela Fisher, Chesapeake
Dr. Virgil Frizzell, McLean
Bill & Catherine James, Roanoke
Lucinda Jennings, Blacksburg
Danny Johnson, Bedford
Marshall P. Jones, Front Royal
Sharon P. Kearns, Leesburg
Kieran J. Kilday, North Palm Beach, FL
Catherine & Art Kubo, Fairfax
Bruce Netschert, Clifton
M. Pettard, Yorktown
Leonard Smock, Richmond
Elena Swick, King George
Walker P. Sydnor, Lynchburg
Brooke Talley, Lynchburg
Kim Talley, Richmond
Cathy & Leroy Williamson, Virginia Beach
Steve Young, Arlington
Craig Zalk, Reston

Piney Grove Field Trip May 29, 2010

Again this summer the VSO and the CCB (Center for Conservation Biology) will conduct the very popular field trip to The Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve, site of nesting Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. Mike Wilson from the CCB will be the trip leader and educator. Trip participants are given access to this protected site through Mike's support and the cooperation of The Nature Conservancy. Participants on trips in the last two years have enjoyed both a look at Red-cockaded Woodpecker nest sites and good views of adult birds.

The trip will depart at 5:20 AM from the Virginia Diner in Wakefield and participants will carpool to Piney Grove as a group. Because of the sensitive nature of the area the trip is limited to 15 people. To participate you must be a VSO member and must pre-register. To register contact Meredith Bell at 804 642-2197 or merandlee@cox.net. In past years there has been a waiting list for this trip so early registration is encouraged.

Become a Facebook Fan

The VSO now has a Facebook fan page. Facebook is an electronic social networking service that allows users to share information in a multimedia, interactive format. When you become a VSO Facebook fan, you can post messages, photos, videos, and links to Websites to the fan page. All posts appear as a continuous stream on the VSO page, but fans also receive all updates on their personal Facebook pages. Additionally, users can add their comments below posts, hold online discussions, invite other fans to their own events (such as a local field trip or speaking engagement), and even email each other privately. It provides a seamless way to share, interact, and stay abreast of the latest VSO news and information.

If you are not already a Facebook user you can go to www.facebook.com and register for a free account. Type “Virginia Society of Ornithology” in the search box, then click on the magnifying glass icon immediately to the right of the box. When you arrive at the VSO’s page, click on the “Become a fan” icon found in the right-hand column of the page. Facebook is user-friendly, so it’s easy to quickly learn the basics of submitting posts and commenting on what others have shared. Within 10 days of its launch, the VSO page had more than 120 fans. Please join this rapidly growing new community!

~Andrew Dolby

VSO Foray Culpeper and Fauquier Counties

The 2010 VSO Foray will be held June 12 – 20 in Culpeper and Fauquier Counties. These counties contain a large portion of the newly established Culpeper Important Bird Area (IBA), which focuses on habitat for grassland and scrubland birds. While forest birds have traditionally received a lot of attention from conservationists, there is an increasing awareness that grassland and scrubland birds have been neglected. Among these understudied birds, foray participants will pay special attention to the Loggerhead Shrike, one of the few North American passerines whose populations have declined continent wide in recent decades.

Virginia lies at the northern edge of the range for non-migratory loggerheads. These year-round residents tend to occupy permanent territories, so it is possible that overlooked loggerhead populations will be discovered during the foray. Other “at risk” species in the Culpeper IBA include Upland Sandpiper, Henslow’s Sparrow, and Northern Bobwhite.

For the foray the counties will be divided up among participants, who will canvas their areas as thoroughly as possible. They will carry out eBird style “traveling counts” of up to five miles per count, tallying all birds seen and collecting additional information on habitat and exact location if a loggerhead is discovered.

The foray headquarters and also the location for dinner on the two Saturday nights will be the Best Western in Culpeper (540 825-1253). Other motels in the immediate vicinity within easy walking distance including Rodeway Inn (540 825-8088), Microtel (800 771-7171), Comfort Inn (540 825-4900 or 877 424-64230) and Holiday Inn (540 825-7444 or 877 863-4780). Those foraying in Fauquier County may prefer to stay in Warrenton.

Anyone wishing to participate in the foray should contact Susan Brown, either by email (susanbb@umich.edu) or telephone after March 15 (757 665-4364).

VSO Annual Meeting
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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. 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 banquet to be held in the Lewis-Nance complex. The after-dinner program will feature 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.

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.

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. Sign up upon arrival when you pick up your registration packet.

Virginia Beach Trip Report
The VSO annual field trip to the Virginia Beach area was held Dec 5 – 7 2009. The weekend featured a trip to the Whitehurst Tract and MacKay Island NWR, an evening at the Atlantic Waterfowl Museum and a morning birding the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

A full report will be in the next VSO Newsletter.
The 2010 Virginia Beach Trip is scheduled for December 3–5, 2010.

VSO Summer Field Trip Highland County
June 4-6, 2010
This year the VSO summer field trip will take place in the beautiful, scenic mountains of western Virginia. Highland County is a Virginia birding hot spot and exciting arrangements have been made with the Bath-Highland Bird Club to host the event. Since this is the first VSO field trip to Highland County, it will be an adventure for all involved. Field trips will be offered Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning.

HEADQUARTERS
The Highland Inn at 68 West Main Street in Monterey is the host hotel. Special room rates for the VSO range from $71.10 to $89.10 (plus tax). The owners of the Inn also own the Montvallee Motel, just down the street at 54 East Main Street. Special VSO rates there are $62.10 single and $71.10 double (plus tax). Check-in time is 2:00 PM and checkout is 11:00 AM. There are coffee makers in all rooms but no refrigerators. The VSO block of rooms at both locations will be held only until May 4 so register before then to ensure availability. The phone number to make reservations at either property is 888 466-4682.

DIRECTIONS
From I-81, take Exit 225 West, Woodrow Wilson Parkway. The Parkway will take you to U.S. 250 West. Follow U.S. 250 West to Monterey. U.S. 250 becomes Main Street in Monterey.

MEALS
A complimentary continental breakfast, included for those staying at the Inn, will be available starting at 7:00 AM on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Lunch and dinner are on your own. Since the Highland Inn is providing the meeting room at no charge, attendees are encouraged to eat dinner there. A light menu will be offered in addition to the regular fare on Friday and Saturday evening. For Saturday’s all-day field trip, it will be possible to order sandwiches in advance from a local restaurant.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON
For those arriving early, Lee and Meredith Bell will lead a field trip exploring the southern parts of Highland County, including Routes 607 and 637. With different types of habitats along rural roads, possible species include orioles, sparrows, warblers, vireos, a variety of raptors, Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark. Meet in the parking lot behind the Highland Inn at 1:00 PM to form carpools. The trip will return to the Inn by 5:00 PM.

FRIDAY EVENING
Following dinner, participants will meet at 8:00 PM for an

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VSO Summer Field Trip Highland County

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overview of the field trips and the birds that can be expected.

SATURDAY FIELD TRIP
This all-day field trip, guided by Patti Reum, Keith Carson, and Marek Smith of the Bath-Highland Bird Club, will travel north and west covering Laurel Fork, which includes Blue Grass Valley and the Locust Springs campground. Various habitats will be covered and expected species include Golden-winged, Canada, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green Warblers. Other target birds are Veery, Warbling Vireo, Vesper and Grasshopper Sparrows, and Bobolink. Meet in the parking lot behind the Inn at 7:45 AM to organize carpools for the day.

SATURDAY EVENING
There will be a tally at 6:30 PM in the Tavern at the Inn.

SUNDAY FIELD TRIP
Patti Reum has arranged for the group to explore some private property in the Blue Grass area on Sunday morning. Target birds include Black-billed Cuckoo, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-headed Woodpecker, and resident warblers such as Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, and American Redstart. Meet in the parking lot behind the Inn at 7:45 AM.

TRIP REGISTRATION
Register in advance by providing the names of participants in your party and a telephone number or email address where you can be contacted if necessary. Send to:

Meredith Bell
8270 Little England Road
Hayes, VA 23072
OR email to: merandlee@cox.net
Phone: 804-642-2197

NOTE: Participants are encouraged to bring a walkie-talkie if they have one to make communication easier among members of the same caravan.

### Virginia Society of Ornithology

#### 2010 Annual Meeting Registration Form

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

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Please make check payable to the Margaret Watson Bird Club. Mail completed form and check to Mrs. Deanna Ferree, NWVC 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.farmvillebirds.net.

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