The Busy Season
By Lenny Bankester

Like most birders, I look forward to spring like no other season. In fact, I sometimes tell people that I don’t have a favorite place in the world as much as I have a favorite time of year. You could put me down in most places during spring and I’d be happy. But, and perhaps because of that, it can be a very busy time of the year. It can be hard not only to keep up with spring migration and flowers blooming, but with all the activities going on. On that note, let me cordially invite you to spend some of your spring with the Virginia Society of Ornithology.

First, make sure to put the VSO Annual Meeting on your calendar. You can catch up with old friends and meet like-minded people from across the state at Mountain Lake Lodge in Pembroke, Virginia. I can’t make any promises about there being a lake since it tends to disappear, but everything I’ve heard about the field trips guarantees that there will be excellent birding. The meeting will run from May 3rd through 5th.

Throughout the spring, the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (http://www.virginiabirds.org/vabba2) will kick back into high gear as breeding commences throughout the commonwealth. It’s a truly impressive effort, with hundreds of volunteers logging tens of thousands of hours recording where Virginia’s birds are breeding. In addition to contributing your own data to the effort, please consider making a financial contribution to the atlas as well (http://www.virginiabirds.org/membership-and-donate).

This multi-year effort requires hired experts to get to every corner of the state. As you know, some of the places with the fewest birders have some of the most interesting birdlife. Just gathering data for one of our roughly 200 priorities blocks can cost $500 a year. We project that finishing the atlas will conservatively cost $250,000 dollars. The VSO has already turned the Atlas into the largest line in our budget and we plan to commit a substantial part of our funds to completing it. Even so, we can’t do it without you, so I hope you will consider a one-time gift or automatic monthly giving that will allow us to plan atlas activities further into the future.

Lastly, I want every member and supporter of the VSO to know that our board meetings are open to the public. Please feel welcome to join us at a meeting to learn about how we work or bring us a project you might want help with. This is your organization and I would love to hear from general members at our discussions. Our next meeting will be at the Mountain Lake Lodge at 10:00 on Friday, May 3rd. You can contact me for details on upcoming meetings at lennybankester@yahoo.com. Have a great spring!
The New River Valley Bird Club is excited to invite you to the 2019 annual meeting, May 3-5, 2019, at Mountain Lake, Virginia. Mountain Lake has been recognized for many years as a unique ecosystem for birds. With the Mountain Lake Conservancy, an adjacent wilderness area and the Mountain Biological Station nearby, birds have a protected mountaintop refuge. With elevations reaching 4,200 feet, there are breedings species of birds not found in nearby Blacksburg, Virginia. Our host will be the Mountain Lake Lodge, formerly Mountain Lake Hotel. The hotel has been under new management for five years, and if you have not visited the hotel recently you will be amazed at the improvements. It was voted the 2018 Virginia Hotel of the Year and the manager Heidi Stone was voted the 2018 Best Hotelier in Virginia.

Check out their website www.mtnlakelodge.com.

WHAT MAKES MOUNTAIN LAKE SPECIAL?
Because of the elevation, the cooler temperatures nurture plant communities which are much like those of Northern Pennsylvania and Southern New York. As a result, several unique breeding species are found here. These include Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Least Flycatchers, Veerys, Brown creepers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, a breeding population of Dark-eyed Juncos which has been studied for more than 30 years, and many species of warblers. There are many other species of migrants and breeding birds on the mountain and surrounding areas. Birding for this weekend should be excellent, because of the elevation, the migrants will be passing through, but most of the leaves will not have emerged. Our field trips will include areas on top of the mountain as well as trips in surrounding areas including Glen Alton which is one of the most interesting birding areas around. Some of the trips will require hiking and there will also be trails for easy walking. We have an excellent group of experienced field trip leaders. More information on the planned field trips will be on the VSO website, www.virginiabirds.org, by April 1, 2019. A complete description of field trips will also be in the registration packet and guests can sign up for field trips when they arrive at the hotel. Weather permitting there will be a rafting trip on the New River for Saturday morning for anyone who might be interested.

LODGING PACKAGE
Mountain Lake Lodge is now a travel destination and we have worked closely with the lodge to provide an excellent package rate for you. Lodging and package price includes 2 nights lodging, two breakfasts and the Saturday Buffet Banquet.

Single Rate = $414.00+Tax
Double rate per person = $255.00+Tax
Triple rate per person = $202.00+Tax

Lunch is available at the hotel in either the Harvest Restaurant or the Stony Creek Tavern (ala carte).

Guests arriving on Thursday night or staying additional nights through Tuesday night are eligible to receive a discounted lodging rate per room of $139+tax per night. Meals are ala carte.

Make your lodging reservations by April 10th to ensure that you receive the VSO package rate.

Contact Mountain Lake Lodge directly by telephone (800-346-3334 or 540-626-7121) to make hotel reservations. Be sure to mention the name VSO Conference.
Friday May 3rd
For guests arriving early there will be several optional field trips in the morning and in the afternoon. Sign up when you arrive at the VSO registration table. Meals for Friday (breakfast, lunch and dinner) are on your own with many choices on the menu of the Harvest Restaurant and Stony Creek Tavern. Mixed drinks, beer and wine can be ordered at the Stony Creek Tavern. Exhibit areas and vendors will be in the Giles Cascade room adjacent to the ballroom. The Friday evening session will be held in the Ballroom and will include the VSO Business meeting, and an introduction to Mountain Lake birding and the field trips.

Saturday May 4th
Buffet Breakfast at 6:30 a.m. in the Harvest Restaurant. Field trips will leave shortly after breakfast. Carpooling is requested for trips off of the mountain. For trips off of the mountain, several options for lunch will be available before returning to Mountain Lake Paper sessions will be in the afternoon in the Ballroom. Exhibits will continue in the Giles Cascade Room adjacent to the ballroom. There will be a silent auction in the display area for your participation. So bring cash or your checkbook. Because we are expecting a large turnout for the meeting, the banquet buffet will be served in two seatings in the Harvest Restaurant. There will also be a cash bar on the first floor patio for you to visit with friends as you await your seating. Our hummingbirds will be there to entertain as well.

Saturday Evening Speaker
Dr. Rebecca Keller, American Bird Conservancy Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture Science Coordinator, will speak on “From Appalachia to the Tropics—Bridging Gaps for the Birds.” The focus will be on conservation efforts for several declining species, including the Golden-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler and Wood Thrush. American Bird Conservancy has been working with international partners, particularly in Colombia and Venezuela to locate wintering areas for these Appalachian species. Many of these birds now carry geolocators and biologists are working to identify critical areas for protection within the tropics.

Sunday Morning May 5th
Breakfast at 6:30a.m. in the Harvest Restaurant. Some of the field trips will be repeated from Saturday and others will be new offerings so that you can visit many of the wonderful areas of Mountain Lake. For those of you staying over for an additional night, there will be field trip opportunities in the afternoon.

Come and join us and enjoy our beautiful New River Valley and Mountain Lake Lodge. We look forward to your visit. See the Meeting Registration form on page 3 of the newsletter.

REGISTRATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 15TH
Registration for VSO Annual Meeting  May 3-5, 2019

NAME(S) ____________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

ADDRESS ________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Email ___________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Phone ___________________________________________________________

When will you arrive at Mountain Lake? Thursday_______Friday Noon_______by 3pm_______
(We would like to have this information so we can plan several field trips for guests arriving early)

Meeting registration $40 $40  x (#registrations)  = _____________

Banquet Cost $32 $32  x (#registrations)  = ______________
(banquet fee included if staying at Mountain Lake Lodge, so only applies for those not staying at lodge)

Annual Meeting T-shirt
(Beige, Short Sleeve, Pocket t-shirt with VSO logo on the front and the beautiful New River Valley Bird Club logo on the back $15.00)

T-Shirts at $15 each
$15 X (# of T-Shirts) = ______________
Indicate T-shirt size
Sm____ Med____
Lrg____ XLrg____

(If you would like to order a t-shirt, registration must be mailed by April 1st to allow time for production)

TOTAL (amount included with form) = $ ______________

______ Yes I would be interested in a Saturday Morning Rafting trip (We will contact you if this can be arranged and the cost of the trip).

Mail this Meeting Registration Form and check (made out to New River Valley Bird Club) to: New River Valley Bird Club, P.O. Box 361, Blacksburg, VA 24063 by April 15th
Call for Presentations

The Virginia Society of Ornithology invites scientific presentations for its 2019 Annual Meeting to be held May 3rd to 5th at Mountain Lake Lodge in Pembroke, VA. 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. Presentations will be given between 2 and 4PM on Saturday, May 4. Please submit the following information about your poster or presentation no later than March 22, 2019. Participants will be notified of their acceptance (and time slot) by April 5, 2019.

- Title of oral presentation or poster
- Presenter’s name
- Email address
- Phone number
- Institutional affiliation (college or organization), if applicable
- Names of co-authors, if applicable
- Brief abstract (250 word limit)
- Audio-visual needs (e.g. laptop, projector, screen, etc.)

Conservation Fund

The VSO Board established the VSO Conservation Fund (originally named the Small Grants Conservation Fund) in March 2007. The VSO Conservation Committee manages the fund. Every year, the Virginia Society of Ornithology awards conservation grants to worthy candidates conducting research in the field of bird conservation with potential benefits to Virginia species and habitats. The VSO Board of Directors has budgeted $2,500.00 annually. Awards are usually $500.00, $1,000.00 or occasionally more, and the amount is determined by the Conservation Committee. Applicants are encouraged to submit a request in writing to the Conservation Committee Chair. Each application should include:

- A short research proposal describing benefits to our knowledge of Virginia’s avifauna or to a Virginia species
- Requested funding level
- Detailed budget for requested funding

The Conservation Committee will then consider each application and confer with the entire Board of the VSO. Recipients are asked to report their findings to the VSO board and members at the completion of their project, occasionally at the VSO Annual Meeting.

There are two deadlines for application: JAN 31 and JULY 31. The committee will notify the applicant(s) around August 15 and February 15 of each year. Just to be clear, there are two separate competitions for these awards; this is not a two-step process.

Please submit your application for a grant to Patti Reum (Conservation Chair of the VSO) at pareum@gmail.com.

Donations to the VSO Conservation Fund are tax deductible and always welcome. You may donate via PayPal on our web store or mail donations to:

VSO
PO BOX 5994
Williamsburg, VA, 23188

Send information (email preferred) to:
DAN BIEKER
Email: danbieker@gmail.com
Phone: 434-971-9618
Postal address:
Dan Bieker
4174 Laird Lane
North Garden, VA 22959

The Witness Tree
Photo by Judy Jones, VSO MEMBER
We couldn’t have asked for more beautiful weather for the February 1-3, 2019, annual VSO field trip to the Outer Banks! We enjoyed sunny skies, mild winds and moderate temperatures most of the weekend. With the combined eyes and ears of 75 participants, we tallied 141 species. Our trip leaders Lee Adams, Bill Akers, Jerry Via and yours truly worked hard to ensure that everyone got to see as many species as possible.

It seems amazing to report that the 2nd most abundant species (after Yellow-rumped Warbler) was a RAZORBILL! On Sunday morning, Jerry Via counted almost 2,000 in the ocean just off the hotel, with hundreds more in either direction. We also had great looks at large numbers from Jennette’s pier on Friday and Saturday.

An unexpected hot spot was the area behind the Exxon Station in Harbinger, where a Golden-crowned Sparrow (typically found only on the West coast) and a Dicksissel were seen by many. Also spotted there: Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Jennettes’s Pier provided great looks at all 3 species of Scoter and large numbers of Razorbill, Red-throated Loon, and Northern Gannets. Other species included Dovekie, Red-breasted Merganser, Common Loon, and Horned Grebe. A pod of dolphins came close to the pier and in the distance we spotted a whale (identity undetermined) spraying water from its blowhole.

At Bodie Island Lighthouse in Saturday afternoon, we enjoyed diverse species of waterfowl in the impoundments, along with a Virginia Rail and Marsh Wren.

Sunday morning Jerry and Bill Akers scored two rare gulls—Black-headed Gull and Little Gull—mixed in with the “regulars.”

Make plans to join us next year. We always have a memorable time, no matter what the weather brings!

Complete list of 141 species for the weekend follows on the next page.
Snow Goose  
Canada Goose  
Tundra Swan  
Wood Duck  
Gadwall  
Eurasian Wigeon  
American Wigeon  
American Black Duck  
Mallard  
Blue-winged Teal  
Northern Shoveler  
Northern Pintail  
Green-winged Teal  
Canvasback  
Redhead  
Ring-necked Duck  
Greater Scaup  
Lesser Scaup  
Common Eider  
Harlequin Duck  
Surf Scoter  
White-winged Scoter  
Black Scoter  
Long-tailed Duck  
Bufflehead  
Common Goldeneye  
Hooded Merganser  
Red-breasted Merganser  
Ruddy Duck  
Northern Bobwhite  
Wild Turkey  
Red-throated Loon  
Common Loon  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Horned Grebe  
Northern Gannet  
Double-crested Cormorant  
American White Pelican  
Brown Pelican  
American Bittern  
Great Blue Heron  
Great Egret  
Snowy Egret  
Little Blue Heron  
Tricolored Heron  
Black-crowned Night-Heron  
White Ibis  
Black Vulture  
Turkey Vulture  
Bald Eagle  
Northern Harrier  
Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Cooper’s Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Clapper Rail  
Virginia Rail  
Common Galinule  
American Coot  
American Avocet  
American Oystercatcher  
Black-bellied Plover  
Kildeer  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Ruddy Turnstone  
Sanderling  
Dunlin  
Wilson’s Snipe  
Dovekie  
Razorbill  
Bonaparte’s Gull  
Black-headed Gull  
Little Gull  
Laughing Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Lesser Black-backed Gull  
Great Black-backed Gull  
Forster’s Tern  
Rock Pigeon  
Mourning Dove  
Great Horned Owl  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
American Kestrel  
Merlin  
Eastern Phoebe  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Fish Crow  
Tree Swallow  
Carolina Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
Brown-headed Nuthatch  
House Wren  
Sedge Wren  
Marsh Wren  
Carolina Wren  
Golden-crowned Kinglet  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Eastern Bluebird  
Hermit Thrush  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
Brown Thrasher  
Northern Mockingbird  
European Starling  
American Pipit  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Palm Warbler  
Pine Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Eastern Towhee  
Chipping Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
Saltmarsh Sparrow  
Fox Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Golden-crowned Sparrow  
Northern Cardinal  
Dicksissel  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Rusty Blackbird  
Common Grackle  
Boat-tailed Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
House Finch  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow

Photo by Kate Lowry
Join us June 7-9 in Warsaw for VSO’s summer field trip to the Northern Neck of Virginia! We’re working with Dr. Ashley Peele, State Coordinator for the second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (VABBA2), to schedule our next summer field trips in under-birded areas of Virginia. We welcome your eyes and ears as we search for signs of breeding birds in Warsaw, Tappahannock and surrounding areas.

**Trip Registration**

To help us plan for the weekend, please register in advance. Provide the names of participants in your party with a telephone number and email address so we can contact you if needed. Register with Meredith Bell, trip coordinator, at merandlee@gmail.com or 804-824-4958.

**Headquarters**

The Quality Inn in Warsaw is the host hotel. The special rate for the VSO block of rooms is $109.49/night (plus tax) for King and $119.49/night (plus tax) for 2 Queens, for one or two occupants. There are microwaves and refrigerators in all rooms. Register by Tuesday, MAY 7, and mention VSO to get the special rate: (804) 333-1700. Hotel address is 4522 Richmond Road, Warsaw, VA 22572.

**Meals**

A complimentary hot breakfast buffet is included with your stay, beginning at 6:30AM on Saturday and Sunday. Bring snacks, beverages and lunch for Saturday because we may be out all day. Dinners are on your own.

**Schedule**

Field trips will be held:
- Friday, June 7 – afternoon only
- Saturday, June 8 – all day
- Sunday, June 9 – morning only

We are still finalizing the locations we’ll visit, and a detailed itinerary will be sent to all registrants prior to the trip. Our goal is to combine favorite birding spots in the area with areas that need coverage.

If you have any questions, contact field trip coordinator Meredith Bell at (804) 824-4958 or merandlee@gmail.com.

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**NEW VSO MEMBERS – Winter 2018-2019**

- Lauren A. Bailey, Arlington, VA
- Alison Berner, Apex, NC
- Matthew Brooks, Albuquerque, NM
- Drew Chaney, Charlottesville, VA
- Dennis and Nancy Cogswell, Williamsburg, VA
- Martina Coker, Cape Charles, VA
- Linda Cooper, Onancock, VA
- Kelly Creger, Virginia Beach, VA
- Robert S. Dean, Clearbrook, VA
- Sally Dick, Chincoteague, VA
- Ann Douglas, Springfield, VA
- Edward Eder, Alexandria, VA
- Jacob Flynn, Virginia Beach, VA
- Karen Foley, Charlottesville, VA
- Jenny Frei, Salem, VA
- Kenneth Gillaspie, Charlottesville, VA
- Arthur Gormley, Machipongo, VA
- Victoria Gussman, Toano, VA
- Barbara Houston, Quinton, VA
- JoAnn Jones, Dillwyn, VA
- Christian Josi, Norfolk, VA
- Philip Lehman, Blacksburg, VA
- Marguerite Long, Painter, VA
- Robert Mains, Spotsylvania, VA
- Deapesh Misra, Centreville, VA
- Penny Owings, Carrollton, VA
- Kathleen Quelland, Lovingston, VA
- Elizabeth Scher, Richmond, VA
- Cindy Schulz, Gloucester, VA
- Linda Tugurian, Gloucester, VA
- Carol Via, Roanoke, VA
- Edward Vigezzi, Germantown, MD
- Barbara Walker, Christiansburg, VA

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**Proposed Slate of Officers 2019-2020**

- **President**: Dan Bieker
- **Vice-President**: Becky Gwynn
- **Past President**: Lenny Bankester
- **Treasurer**: Terri Cuthriell
- **Secretary**: Phil Kenny
- **Membership Secretary**: Shirley Devan
- **Newsletter Editor**: Lucinda Baker
- **Raven Editor**: Mike Stinson
- **Virginia Birds Editor**: Bill Williams

**Terms Expire 2020**
- Rexanne Bruno, Williamsburg
- Ashley Peele, Blacksburg
- Leonard Smock, Richmond

**Terms Expire 2021**
- Patti Reum, Highland County
- Cheryl Jacobson, Williamsburg

**Open Position**
- Terms Expire 2022
- Dr. Richard Rowe, Lexington
- Diane Liepowski, Harrisonburg
- Jessica Ruthenberg, Chesapeake

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VSO Website: virginiabirds.org • Facebook: Virginia Society of Ornithology
Listserv: mailman.listserv.com/listmanager/listinfo/va-bird
The Virginia Society of Ornithology
PO Box 5994
Williamsburg, VA 23188

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VSO OFFICERS
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PAST PRESIDENT: Jeff Trollinger
VICE PRESIDENT: Daniel Bieker
SECRETARY: Phil Kenny
TREASURER: Terri Cuthriell
VIRGINIA BIRDS EDITOR: Bill Williams
RAVEN EDITOR: Mike Stinson
NEWSLETTER: Lucinda Baker
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Shirley Devan

VSO BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Terms Expire 2019
Bill Williams, Williamsburg
Lesley Bulluck, Richmond
Laura Neale, Rockbridge County

Terms Expire 2020
Rexanne Bruno, Williamsburg
Ashley Peele, Blacksburg
Leonard Smock, Richmond

Terms Expire 2021
Patti Reum, Highland County
Cheryl Jacobson, Williamsburg
Open Position

2019 VSO Membership Renewal

Name & Address: ____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Email address: _______________________________________________________________

Please return this form with your check, payable to the VSO:

VSO Merchandise
Virginia’s Birdlife “Gold Book” (Rottenborn, Brinkley 2007) $20.00
VSO Arm Patch $4.00
VSO Cloisonné Pin $5.00
VSO Field Checklist FREE!
Download the latest 2018 list at: www.virginiabirds.org/publications/field-checklist

2019 VSO Membership Renewal

New ___Renewing ___ Gift ___
___Contributing Membership $60
___Sustaining Membership $35
___Family Membership $25
___Active Membership $20
___Student Membership $10
___Life Membership (individual) $500

I would like to make a donation to:
$______Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2 project
$______American Kestrel Nest Box Project
$______VSO Conservation Fund
$______VSO General Fund
$______VSO Endowment Fund/
$______J. J. Murray Student Research Grant Award

If you have questions about your membership, contact Membership Secretary Shirley Devan at: vsomembership@cox.net Your support means so much to the success of the VSO. Thank you!

[The Virginia Society of Ornithology is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and all membership fees, donations, and contributions are tax deductible.]