



VSO Newsletter

Vol. 67 • No. 4

www.virginiabirds.org

FALL 2021



Working Together for Conservation

By Terri Cuthriell, VSO President

After serving VSO as Treasurer for seven years, I am honored to assume the role of President of the VSO. I am deeply grateful to my predecessor, Dan Bieker, for his outstanding contributions to VSO during his presidency and as board member. During Dan's tenure, he worked tirelessly to establish a vast network of kestrel boxes that now span the state. At Bramble Hill, another project Dan led, I've observed the result of his labor as the kestrel box there successfully fledged chicks this summer. Now that's a great example of putting the VSO mission of bird conservation into action! I learned a lot from Dan about quiet perseverance and am humbled to now be standing in his boots (!) at the helm of an organization which, for over 90 years, has been dedicated to the love of birds of Virginia.

So, where is VSO now? We've got a lot going on! As you are aware, VSO has been actively supporting the Second Breeding Bird Atlas thanks to the volunteer efforts of many of you and your generous donations. Data collection is complete, and analysis is underway. Our partners at VT and DWR are working hard to get that information out to the public soon. At our new property, Bramble Hill, we're working to improve habitat before spring for Golden-winged Warblers and other early successional specialists. We're excited that Bramble Hill will be a springboard for research and educational opportunities at this spectacular location.

I tend to get focused on daily business, but recently I decided to make a point of recalling that we are members of an organization that spans the Commonwealth. From the mountains to the coast, Virginia is endowed with outstanding and varied habitats. There are birds everywhere for us to enjoy daily. But a day in the life of a bird is all about survival, and birds need our help more than ever. Birds need advocates to help preserve habitat, to ensure protections from collisions, invasive predators, toxins, and the growing dangers of climate change. It's up to us to take on the many challenges for birds in the Commonwealth and beyond. VSO wants to support our local bird clubs, private and public organizations, researchers, and educators who are making a difference along these fronts. We will strive to engage the diverse people of all age groups who live in Virginia. The study of birds is rich and fascinating, and we all need to understand their challenges more deeply and become involved to help preserve birds and the environment we share with them.

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Editor: Dixie Sommers

Change of Address (USPS or email)

Virginia Society of Ornithology
PO Box 5994, Williamsburg, VA 23188
vsomembership@cox.net

Send submissions by email. Attach MS Word document or plain text, with high resolution photos. Submissions may be edited for style and/or length.

Contact VSO President Terri Cuthriell at: virginiabirdconservation@gmail.com

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President's message, continued.

The list of challenges for birds continues to grow, and the only way to make a lasting impact is through our individual efforts, but how much more we can accomplish when we focus and direct our efforts together! I am a member of VSO for the companionship of all my VSO friends and our opportunities to learn and share the thrill of birding together. But I accepted the role of President to have a greater impact on conservation than I can have alone.

Emily Dickenson poignantly stated, “hope is the thing with feathers.” Today *we* are what hope looks like to birds in Virginia. We invite you to join us in our collective efforts to preserve and protect the prolific birdlife that is our heritage in Virginia. We look forward to seeing you in Chincoteague in September!

Bramble Hill Management Planning Underway

By Faye Cooper, VSO Board Member

In our last newsletter (Summer 2021, Vol. 67 No. 3) VSO announced the exciting news about receiving the gift of Bramble Hill, a 30-acre nature preserve located on the Virginia-West Virginia state line in the Blue Grass Valley of Highland County. Wayne O’Bryan donated the property to VSO in memory of his late wife, Margaret, an avid birder and nature lover who welcomed like-minded individuals to the property during their 27 years of ownership. This generous gift was made with the understanding that VSO would continue to manage the property for wildlife, and especially for breeding pairs of golden-winged warblers.

The Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) is a neotropical migratory songbird that breeds in young forests and shrub land habitats of the Appalachian Mountains and upper Great



Golden-winged Warbler. Photo by Marshall Faintich.

Lakes. It is considered an important flagship species for demonstrating the value of diverse age-class and successional forest management.

Over the last 50 years, this warbler’s population has declined significantly throughout its Appalachian breeding range due to the loss of young forests. The fact that Golden-winged Warblers have been traveling from their wintering grounds in Central and South America to Bramble Hill for decades supports the great opportunity for VSO to contribute to the recovery and sustainment of this vibrant songbird.

A team of VSO board members and partners has been developing and implementing a management plan that

Left: Dan Bieker, Dick Rowe, and Lesley Bulluck explore the Bramble Hill property with other VSO team members to determine habitat management needs and options. Photo by Faye Cooper



Bramble Hill, continued.

will ensure the property and its unique habitat will continue to support the breeding habitat for the rare Golden-winged Warbler and many other flora and fauna species, while also supporting VSO's educational and scientific mission.

The first priority will be to enhance breeding habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler. Joining the VSO team for a walking tour of the property were Tiffany Beachy and Christopher Peters, representatives of the Golden-Winged Warbler Working Lands for Wildlife Project of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This program offers a wealth of information and expertise as well as cost-share funding for practices that could aid VSO in its management efforts. The next step is taking this information and the NRCS staff summary report from their tour to develop a working plan. Some basic work may begin this fall.

We also anticipate applying to the NRCS cost-share programs to help fund some of the management work, including brush mowing to promote native vegetation and successional growth, removal of invasive flora, planting native trees, and creating transitional forest edges. Creation and maintenance of walking paths for visiting birders and naturalists are also part of the plan.

Another top priority is to develop policies and guidelines for the use of property by the public, including potential rental of the farmhouse. Legal and tax implications are currently being investigated and considered. The goal for the property's use is to comply with VSO's educational and scientific mission and to generate revenue that will support structure maintenance and habitat management.

Stay tuned for more information about future plans for Bramble Hill. In the meantime, to comply with the wishes of Wayne and Margaret O'Bryan, the property remains open to birders and other nature lovers. For more information go to:

virginiabirds.org/bramble-hill

For questions and comments, contact Faye Cooper (fcooper2@verizon.net).

More good news from Bramble Hill!

VSO recently received a generous \$25,000 gift from the Rimora Foundation to support the property's management needs. This is a huge financial boost that will further ensure the future of this special habitat.



Tiffany Beachy and Christopher Peters, (2nd and 3rd from left) NRCS representatives, share information with the VSO Bramble Hill team about their Golden-winged Warbler program. Photo by Faye Cooper.

Bramble Hill Celebration of Margaret "Maggie" O'Bryan

By Faye Cooper, VSO Board Member

Friends and fellow birders gathered at Bramble Hill in Highland County on a beautiful July day to share memories and stories, many of them quite humorous, about Margaret O'Bryan.

A beautiful bench provided by the Richmond Audubon Society (RAS) was dedicated in Margaret's honor and will be enjoyed by future Bramble Hill visitors for years to come. The O'Bryans are founding members of the RAS.

Jason Bulluck, Director of the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage, welcomed everyone and shared the history of how this generous land donation came about. Jason has volunteered his time since late 2018, assisting the O'Bryans to find the right

Continued next page.



The beautiful bench honoring Margaret O'Bryan was provided by the Richmond Audubon Society.

landowner and conservation outcome for Bramble Hill. "Margaret knew that Bramble Hill was a special place, where many rare bird species could be observed, most notably the Golden-winged Warbler. For that reason, she welcomed bird watchers to Bramble Hill for the 27 years they owned the property. The donation of Bramble Hill to the VSO will ensure that Margaret's wishes continue, and that this property will be permanently managed for bird habitat, so that bird watchers and naturalists can continue to enjoy this unique place." Jason also welcomed and thanked Wayne and Margaret's son, David O'Bryan, who attended on behalf of the family.

Julie Kacmarcik, a longtime friend of the O'Bryan family, and leader in the RAS and birding community, shared heartwarming memories of her close friend stating "there was no one like her. Her kindness and generosity knew no bounds. She made me a better person and I believe, never met a stranger." She revealed that one of Margaret's



favorite pastimes was exploring the natural surroundings at Bramble Hill and writing both prose and poetry about her observations. She shared a favorite poem Margaret wrote entitled "The High Meadow" that concludes with these lovely verses:

*I remember the day my father was buried.
A flock of warblers landed in the dogwood tree
outside the kitchen window.
There were Cape May, Yellow-rumped,
Pine, Palm, and Prairie, Magnolia and Hooded,
all in their finest yellow-trimmed plumage.
They serenaded me for a few minutes then
vanished.
That was my father's true funeral service.
On the way back down the mountain, beside the
path
I come upon a rattlesnake swallowing a young
rabbit.
Tragic for the rabbit, but it would sustain the
snake for months.
I study the snake and its sinuous beauty.
I rejoice in it all.*

Dan Bieker, immediate past VSO president and leader who shared the Bramble Hill vision, noted that "acquisition of this property represents both a challenge and opportunity for the VSO, to not only protect and enhance habitat for rare and unusual species, but to help preserve a place of quiet and solitude in an ever-busy world. We're grateful to Margaret for all the years she dedicated to Bramble Hill and hope it can continue to be a place of peace for wildlife, and nature lovers."

Inscribed on the bench is Margaret's favorite Henry James quote, a befitting reminder to all of us.

**Three things in human life are important:
the first is to be kind; the second is to be
kind; and the third is to be kind.**

Left: Jason Bulluck welcomes friends and colleagues to Bramble Hill for a bench dedication in memory of Margaret O'Bryan.

Migratory Birds Need Your Help

By Guy Babineau, VSO Board Member

Members of the Virginia Society of Ornithology are on the leading front of bird conservation across the state, nationally, and beyond. Examples of recent successes include helping ensure the tern breeding colony at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel was relocated, an amazingly successful five-year field activity for the Breeding Bird Atlas, as well as the preservation of unique high elevation habitat at Bramble Hill in Highland County.

Using our combined voices to contact our elected officials is another important way. Right now, your voice is needed to ask your U.S. representative to co-sponsor and support a bi-partisan bill (H.R.4833) recently reintroduced to strengthen the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). So far, two Virginia Representatives are co-sponsors: Donald Beyer, 8th district, and Gerry Connolly, 11th district.

VSO members are well aware of the precipitous decline in the number of birds from published studies as well as personal experience. The MBTA has helped for over 100 years but is in need of strengthening to prevent flawed interpretations from being made. Preventing these flawed interpretations can only be performed by legislative action.

The VSO has a responsibility to help the birds. The VSO, with your support and encouragement, has been taking joint action. In this case, we also need your individual action.



Scarlet Tanager. Photo by Guy Babineau

Please contact your U.S. Representative and ask him or her to “Co-Sponsor and support (H.R.4833) to strengthen the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.” You can contact them on your own or use this handy [information and form](#) provided by the American Bird Conservancy..

VSO Outer Banks Field Trip – Save the Dates!

Save the dates - February 4-6, 2022 - for the VSO field trip to the Outer Banks. The host hotel is Comfort Inn South Oceanfront in Nags Head, and we've reserved a block of rooms. Book your room and mention the VSO to get the special room rates of \$76 Oceanfront or \$62 Sound View: 252-441-6315. Watch for details in the Winter newsletter.



Left: VSO birders in North Carolina, 2019.

Photo by Phillip Mitchell

Update on the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas

By Dixie Sommers, VSO Newsletter Editor

The Atlas Final Products Committee has been busy over the summer, working to define what 2nd Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (VABBA2) should be. Committee members are from the VSO, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) and Virginia Tech. Sergio Harding of DWR chairs the group; VSO representatives are Rexanne Bruno, Lisa Perry and Dixie Sommers. VSO Board member and DWR Watchable Wildlife Biologist Jessica Ruthenberg is also on the committee.

To date we have identified chapters and appendices and detailed the content of the species accounts. We have examined options on the format of the atlas, including print, website and eBook. We will focus soon on estimated costs and project schedule.

While the Final Products Committee is working, Dr. Ashley Peele and her team at Virginia Tech are reviewing and organizing the millions of Atlas field records to create databases that will be used to produce much of the final published Atlas. Their work is funded by DWR, with the data clean-up continuing through 2021. They will then move on to data analysis and production of much, but not all, of the content for the published Atlas. The analysis work is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2023.

While a great deal of work is before us, we are excited about initial findings of the Atlas project:

- Painted Bunting was confirmed as breeding in Virginia for the first time-ever.
- Six additional species were confirmed as breeding in Virginia that had not been previously documented in Virginia's first

Breeding Bird Atlas: Anhinga, Common Merganser, Magnolia Warbler, Mississippi Kite, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

- Several of Virginia's known breeding bird species were confirmed as breeding in parts of Virginia where they previously had gone undetected. For example, Chuck-Will's Widow was documented for the first time in Southwest Virginia's Lee County. Swainson's Warbler were documented as probable breeders in Smyth, Russell, and Tazewell Counties--all first-time records for that species.



Mississippi Kite feeding juvenile, Fairfax County. One of seven new breeding species for Virginia! Photo © Donald Sweig.

How You Can Help the VABBA2!

- ✦ Help the VSO fund our part of the final Atlas by donating on-line at www.virginiabirds.org or by mail to VSO, P.O. Box 5994, Williamsburg, VA 23188-5994. Thank you!
- ✦ Let us know your questions and comments by email to VSOAtlas@gmail.com
- ✦ Receive e-mail atlas updates from DWR by subscribing at <https://dwr.virginia.gov/atlas-updates/>
- ✦ Check out atlas information on the VSO website <http://www.virginiabirds.org/vabba2> and the DWR website <http://www.dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/birds/virginia-breeding-bird-atlas>.

A Wildlife Viewing Plan for Virginia

By Jessica Ruthenberg VSO Board Member and Watchable Wildlife Biologist, DWR

Do you recall participating in a focus group or a survey on wildlife viewing in Virginia or did you submit a comment on a draft Virginia Wildlife Viewing Plan? If so, thanks to input from you and over 4,000 others, the Commonwealth now has an official, finalized Virginia Wildlife Viewing Plan.

On May 27 of this year, the Board of Directors the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) endorsed the Virginia Wildlife Viewing Plan, the agency's first comprehensive plan developed specifically for engaging with and supporting wildlife viewing across the Commonwealth. The DWR Board's exciting endorsement marked the culmination of a 3.5-year collaborative effort between the DWR and Virginia Tech's Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation.

This plan holds great significance as it will guide the agency's efforts related to wildlife viewing over the next ten years. Becky Gwynn, the DWR's Deputy Director, shares the excitement about this achievement, noting that "this blueprint is the first of its kind in the country – it's really exciting to know that Virginia continues to be a leader in developing and promoting wildlife viewing opportunities and connecting people with nature."

The plan defines wildlife viewing as, "intentionally observing, feeding [wild birds], photographing wildlife, or visiting or maintaining natural areas because of wildlife."

It outlines four major goals that set the overarching direction and priorities for what the DWR will strive to accomplish in regard to wildlife viewing:

- 1) Connect diverse segments of the public to wildlife and wildlife viewing in Virginia,
- 2) Provide a variety of wildlife viewing opportunities accessible to all in the Commonwealth,
- 3) Promote wildlife and habitat conservation through wildlife viewing, and
- 4) Connect broader constituencies to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources through wildlife viewing.

These goals—as well as the objectives, strategies, and potential tactics that accompany them—were

informed by a participatory planning process and a three-part study of wildlife recreationists.

The plan was co-produced by the Dayer Human-Dimensions Lab at Virginia Tech, 15 DWR staff serving on a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and 14 individuals and organizational representatives with experience in wildlife viewing who served on a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC). Serving on the SAC were Laura Neale (VSO), Bob Schamerhorn (Richmond Audubon Society), Kathie Driscoll (Lynchburg Birding Club), and Mary Foster (Virginia Southside Bird Club). Jessica Ruthenberg, a DWR Watchable Wildlife Biologist and VSO Board Member, served on the TAC.

The three-part study, in which many of you may have participated, was initiated and funded by the DWR and conducted by Virginia Tech. It used focus groups, a survey of Virginia residents, a survey of wildlife recreationists affiliated with DWR, and a web-based stakeholder analysis. Further public input was received through broad promotion of a draft plan and a call for public comment.

To implement this ambitious plan over the next ten years, the DWR has formed a Wildlife Viewing Plan Implementation Committee that will lead this plan forward.

To learn more and find a copy of the full Virginia Wildlife Viewing Plan, visit the [DWR website](#).



Photo: Shutterstock

Beat the 2022 Dues Increase! Renew Your VSO Membership Now

By Shirley Devan, VSO Membership Secretary

VSO last increased dues in 2006 – 15 years ago!

Just in the last few years the VSO has taken on substantial challenges – the most demanding one being the 2nd Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas. The field research for the Atlas has ended but the analysis and publication phase will take the next four to five years. Decisions are still being made about the final products, but the VSO is responsible for funding a good bit of this work.

Bramble Hill, a wonderful 30-acre property in Highland County, has come to the VSO. Management, maintenance, and conservation of this unique birding habitat – including Golden-wing Warbler breeding habitat – will require more investment from the VSO in the coming years. We hope that VSO members will help to treasure and preserve this unique asset.

In addition to these obligations, VSO wants to increase funding for Conservation Grants, Murray Scholarships, Field Ornithology Scholarships, and Youth Conservation Scholarships. We are confident that our membership supports ALL these efforts in

addition to our ongoing “regular” membership benefits such as newsletters, *Virginia Birds*, and *The Raven* PLUS field trips and Annual Meetings which we hope will return to normal schedules in 2022.

We appreciate your continuing support over the past years and trust you will be with us in 2022 and beyond.

Renew your dues before December 31, 2021, before dues increase on January 1, 2022. Use the membership renewal form on page 12 or renew online (safely and easily with your debit or credit card or PayPal account) at the [VSO website](#).

New dues in effect January 1, 2022:

- Student – \$10 (unchanged)
- Active – \$20 (unchanged)
- Family – \$35
- Sustaining – \$50
- Contributing – \$75

NOTE: We have maintained membership fees at low accessible levels for Students and Active Members. If you are able, please renew at a higher level to ensure the VSO’s programs are on sound footing in 2022.

NEW VSO MEMBERS, JUNE - AUGUST 2021		
Ken and Fran Bass, Lincoln, DE Connie Ericson, Arlington David Hart, Springfield Karen Hines, Williamsburg James Kaeli, Penn Laird William Leighty, Richmond Mary Mays, Richmond Cathleen McGarvey, Danville	Angel Moreland, Ruther Glen Carol Mullen, Arlington Millie Neagle, Henrico Zack Perdue, Harrisonburg Katherine Perdue, Charlottesville Marta Powers, Lynchburg Eve Schwartz, Keswick	Sonal Shah, Washington, DC Stephen Templeman, Charlottesville Patricia Terrell, Reston Elizabeth Thomas, Washington, DC Dennis Utterback, Boyce Jack and Sandi Webster, Newport
VSO OFFICERS	VSO BOARD OF DIRECTORS	
President: Terri Cuthriell Vice President: Roberta Kellam Secretary: Phil Kenny Treasurer: Eileen Geller Conservation: Patti Reum Membership Secretary: Shirley Devan Newsletter Editor: Dixie Sommers Webmaster: Lisa Koerner Perry Raven Co-editors: John & Jennifer Styrsky	Terms Expire 2022 Diane Lepkowski, Harrisonburg Richard Rowe, Lexington Jessica Ruthenberg, Norfolk Terms Expire 2023 Faye Cooper, Staunton Ellison Orcutt, Richmond Alan Williams, Luray	Terms Expire 2024 Guy Babineau, Earlysville Chris Bolgiano, Fulks Run William Leighty, Richmond

VSO Seeks Award Nominations and Grant and Scholarship Applications

Part of the VSO's mission is *to encourage the systematic study of birds in Virginia*. Two important ways we carry out this mission are to recognize scientific achievements through awards and to support the development of young scientists through grants and scholarships. The VSO is currently seeking nominations and applications for the following awards, grants and scholarship.

Mitchell A. Byrd Award

The Mitchell A. Byrd Award, established in 2011, recognizes outstanding scientific achievement in the field of ornithology. The award is named for Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd, retired College of William and Mary Professor of Biology, whose research career was key to the restoration of the eastern United States' Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon populations.

Recipients shall demonstrate an exceptional record of contribution to the scientific knowledge of Virginia's birds through evidence including, but not limited to, publications such as papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals and books or book chapters derived from the candidates' original scientific research, conference presentations, recommendation letters from scientific peers, and other forms of peer recognition (e.g., an award from a national scholarly society).

Any member of the Virginia Society of Ornithology may nominate a candidate for the Byrd Award. The Byrd Award Committee selects a recipient for the award from among the candidates, and the award is presented during the Annual Meeting.

Please contact Patti Reum at pareum@gmail.com to submit the name of your nominee. Deadline is **January 31, 2022**. The award will be presented at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

Jackson M. Abbott Conservation Award

In 1989, the VSO named its conservation award in honor of Jackson M. Abbott for his lifelong devotion to conservation and his effective work on its behalf. The Jackson M. Abbott Conservation Award is given for outstanding work in conserving Virginia's birds and/or the state's natural areas. The award, a

framed certificate acknowledging the accomplishments of the recipient, is presented at the annual meeting.

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 Patti Reum at pareum@gmail.com no later than **January 31, 2022**.

The Conservation Committee will make its recommendations to the VSO Board at the February meeting. The award will be presented at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

James Eike Service Award

In 1983, the Virginia Society of Ornithology Board of Directors approved the James Eike Service Award, named in honor of James Eike, a member of the Virginia Society of Ornithology from 1933 until his death in 1983. Eike's long and faithful service, his dedication, and his enthusiasm in promoting the work of the VSO gave him a unique status in the organization. The recipient is recognized by the presentation of a silver Raven pin. The first pin was given to Claire Eike, in honor of her late husband for whom the award was named.

The James Eike Service Award is given to recognize a VSO member for outstanding service to the Virginia Society of Ornithology. Eligibility for consideration would include service as an officer, board member, foray director, field trip leader, or other contributions to the organization.

The Eike Service Award Committee is soliciting nominations for the award. Nominators should send a letter of nomination giving the rationale behind the nomination. In addition, two letters of support are required. These materials should be sent to **Patti Reum** at pareum@gmail.com by **February 1, 2022**. The committee will review all nomination packets and make its recommendation to the VSO Board in the spring with the award itself being presented at the 2022 VSO Annual Meeting.

Continued next page.

Awards, continued.

VSO Conservation Grants, \$500-\$1000

Every year, the VSO 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 annually. Awards are usually \$500, \$1,000 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 one-to-two-page research proposal describing how the proposed work will lead to improved conservation of Virginia's avifauna and/or its habitat
- Requested funding level
- Detailed budget for requested funding

The Conservation Committee will 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 in May.

DEADLINE for application: **January 31, 2022.** The committee will notify the applicant(s) around February 15. Please submit your application to VSO's Conservation Committee Chair Patti Reum at pareum@gmail.com.

VSO Murray Award, \$1000

The Murray Award was established in 1980 to honor the Rev. J. J. Murray, Sr., a charter member of the VSO and the editor of its journal, *The Raven*, from its inception until 1969.

The award is designed to promote graduate and undergraduate research consisting of current or projected field studies on Virginia birds. The VSO Board of Directors has budgeted \$2,000 annually to support two proposals. Proposals will be judged for their scientific merit and the likelihood that the work will make a meaningful contribution to our understanding of Virginia avifauna.

Check out last year's Murray Award and Field Ornithology Scholarship winners in the Summer VSO Newsletter:

*Garrett Rhyne, Louisiana State University
Michael Academia, College of William and Mary
Mikayla Call, Virginia Tech*



Osprey, the research subject of 2020 Murray Award winner Michael Academia. Photo by Dick Rowe

Upon completion of the research, the recipient will be asked to present the results at a VSO annual meeting held in May and is encouraged to publish the results in an appropriate journal. The recipient will also be awarded a one-year membership in the VSO.

Applicants must submit the following materials by **January 31, 2021**, as a PDF file:

- Proposal of up to 5 pages including background, objectives/hypotheses, methods, expected results, and benefits to VA birds. Citations should be included in the 5 pages.
- Budget describing how the VSO funds will be used along with any other funding already acquired to carry out the project.

Continued next page.

Awards, continued.

- Name of the institution and department they are enrolled in, the degree they are working towards, and the name of their research advisor.

Applicants should also have their advisor send a letter of recommendation separately that, at a minimum, verifies the applicant is a student in good standing and is receiving the advisor's support for the proposed project. Inclusion of additional information about the applicant is also helpful and will be considered by the reviewers.

Applicants will be notified of the results by mid-March 2022. Please send proposals or requests for information to Lesley Bulluck, Center for Environmental Studies, VCU, lpbulluck@vcu.edu

VSO Field Ornithology Scholarship, \$500

The VSO would like to annually support one student to participate in a formal training/workshop to gain field ornithology skills (i.e., mist-netting, banding, etc.).

Applicants need to submit the following materials by January 31, 2022 (a) description of the workshop they hope to attend, including a web link to the opportunity if one exists, (b) description of why the student needs to gain these skills, and (c) a brief budget of expected expenses.

Students working with a faculty member to carry out a specific project to benefit Virginia birds will be given priority. Applicants will be notified of the results by early March 2022.

Please send proposals or requests for information by **January 31, 2022**, to Lesley Bulluck, Center for Environmental Studies, VCU, lpbulluck@vcu.edu

Fall is the Time for Hawks!

Virginia's mountain and coastal geography makes fall a special time for birders! The state hosts 16 hawk watches registered with the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). Most are in the Appalachian range, with Rockfish Gap, Harvey's Knob and Snicker's Gap perhaps the best known.

Two hawk watches are in the coastal plain: College Creek in Williamsburg (spring migration only) and Kiptopeke on the Eastern Shore.

These are great places to spend a day looking skyward. On a good day, you can see thousands of birds flying over. Mid-September is peak time for Broad-winged Hawks. Golden Eagles, hard to see at other times, may appear. Some counts also track Monarch butterflies on their southward journey.

If you are new to birding or want to brush up on your raptor ID skills, visiting a hawk watch is the way to go. You will find experienced birders who love to point out the birds coming over and who keep a tally that may be reported to HMANA. Don't forget to take a comfortable chair!



Sharp-shinned Hawk. Photo by Dixie Sommers

At least two of these hawk watches are sponsored by VSO member bird clubs: the Augusta, Piedmont Virginia and Rockingham Bird Clubs (Rockfish Gap), and the Lynchburg and Roanoke Valley Bird Clubs (Harvey's Knob).

To find a Virginia hawk watch, check out [HMANA's site](#).



The Virginia Society of
ORNITHOLOGY
PO BOX 5994
WILLIAMSBURG, VA
23188

ADDRESS SERVICE

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US Postage Paid
Lynchburg, VA
Permit No 161

2022 VSO Membership Renewal

Name & Address: _____

Email address: _____

_____ Check here if you wish to receive VSO publications electronically by email via Constant Contact. Please print your email address clearly. (Note that we do not share members' email addresses with any other organizations. The VSO may contact you by email to notify you of upcoming events, field trips, annual meetings, and organization news. You may opt out of these email notices at any time.)

New _____ **Renewing** _____ **Gift** _____

- _____ Contributing Membership \$60 _____ Active Membership \$20
- _____ Sustaining Membership \$35 _____ Student Membership \$10
- _____ Family Membership \$25 _____ Life Membership (Individual) \$500

I would like to make a donation to:

- \$ _____ Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2 project \$ _____ VSO General Fund
- \$ _____ VSO Conservation Fund \$ _____ VSO Endowment Fund

VSO Merchandise

- Virginia's Birdlife "Gold Book" (Rottemborn, Brinkley 2007) \$20.00
- VSO Arn Patch \$4.00
- VSO Cloisonné Pin \$5.00
- VSO Field Checklist FREE! Download the latest 2019 list at:
<http://www.virginiabirds.org/publications/field-checklist>

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR CHECK, PAYABLE TO THE VSO:

VSO, PO BOX 5994, WILLIAMSBURG, VA 23188-5994

You may also join, renew and purchase items online at:
www.virginiabirds.org/membership-and-donate

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. All membership fees, donations, and contributions are tax deductible to the extent of the law.