



VSO Newsletter

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Lenny Bankester, *PRESIDENT*, VSO

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Send submissions electronically via email whenever possible. Attach text as Word document or plain text file. Attach images as separate files: please do not embed in email body. Send the largest file possible. Images will not print well if formatted as for the web. Submissions may be edited for style or length.

Submit copy for:

Fall, September 21, Winter December 21
 Bird reports in this newsletter may not have been approved by VARCOM.

Vice Presidents

By Lenny Bankester

By the time you read this column, the VSO will have a new president and I'm very pleased to hand things over to Dan Bieker. Dan has been a constant feature of my time on the VSO board and I've been impressed with his dedication to the mission of the VSO and persistence in getting things done. For the Kestrel Nest Box project, Dan personally made 400 nest boxes and installed many of them himself after explaining to landowners the importance of the project. Away from the field, Dan has been a reassuring presence in resolving administrative and financial questions, too. I've always appreciated his perceptive questions that get to the heart of the issue or drive a conversation back to its main purpose. I can't remember ever having a board meeting without Dan. This is all, in short, why I'm happy to see Dan become president: he's just the kind of person that the VSO needs.

It's been a busy couple of years for the VSO, as always, and I'm proud to see what has been accomplished. The Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas has resulted in a monumental amount of data being collected and is already producing new insights. The Kestrel Nest Box project created a wonderful template for conservation activity in Virginia and is, equally importantly, being monitored for results and lessons that can be applied to future projects. The VSO has also expanded its footprint into migratory wintering grounds through our research in the Dominican Republic and trips to Guatemala.

Plus, the board has accrued other other less-glamorous, though equally vital accomplishments, like rationalizing our finances, budgeting essential support for the Breeding Bird Atlas, organizing an annual meeting, and fund-raising to bring in even more support for the atlas. And we've also been quick to speak out for conservation issues in Virginia, advocating with the Governor's office and the General Assembly for conservation legislation and better protections for wildlife. With our current board and officers, and with our incoming board members, I can expect all of this to continue and new and better things to occur in the future.

And as for me, I'm glad that I won't be going far, even as my time as President ends. The VSO wisely established a Past President function that will let me serve a support function for the board and officers, as well as provide some institutional knowledge gained from my previous positions in the VSO. I'll continue my work on the Atlas fund-raising committee to make sure that the project finishes strong and the benefits are widely shared. So, thank you for your support during my time as President. I've learned a tremendous amount through this work and had experiences I never would have otherwise. And if you'll indulge me one last time: don't forget to vote in every election, write your representatives about issues you care about, and, please, teach a child about nature!

Annual Meeting, Mountain Lake Lodge, May 3-5, 2019

By Pat Polentz, *New River Valley Bird Club*



Looking for the elusive Golden-winged, a life bird for many.

The annual meeting at Mountain Lake began Friday afternoon with several field trips filled to capacity with eager birders, including the Mountain Lake Biological Station. The weekend continued with excellent looks at Canada Warblers, Black-throated Blues, Chestnut-sideds, Blackburnians, along with Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, a pair of Red Crossbills and other less colorful migrants. Blackburnian Warblers were seen on every field trip around Mountain Lake. There were great views from the hotel platform on Rt.700 of the Golden-winged Warbler territory. During afternoon rain showers there was porch birding. Birders watched Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at the feeders that were in the hotel flower beds while Juncos, Chipping Sparrows, Towhees and six male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks along with one female were on the ground eating seed spilled from a feeder.



Chipping Sparrow. Photo by Phil Kenny



The elusive Golden-winged. Photo by Phil Kenny

The keynote speaker, Dr. Becky Keller, Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture Science Coordinator and Chair of Partners in Flight International Science Committee, gave a presentation on bridging the gaps for birds migrating between Appalachia and the tropics. Partners in Flight has developed a framework for full, life-cycle conservation planning for breeding and wintering habitats of migratory birds



Ovenbird, Photo by Bruce Grimes



Veery, Photo by Bruce Grimes

The silent auction and hummingbird quilt raffle were a huge success raising \$789 which the New River Valley Bird Club is contributing to the VSO Conservation Committee and the VABBA2 project. Thanks to all who participated in the raffle and silent auction. And thanks to the 160+ attendees who came in spite of the predicted rainy weekend.

Top left: Bill Akers, one of the field trip leaders. Both photos by Shirley Devan

Top right: Intense search for the Golden-winged Warbler seen at the overlook on Mountain Lake Road Saturday afternoon. Success!



Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Photo by Judy Jones

Eike Award given to Patti Reum



American Kestrel, a bird near and dear to Patti's heart.

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

Patti Reum has been a member of the VSO Board for at least seven years and the perennial Chair of the Conservation Committee.

Among her many projects for VSO:

- She worked with Virginia Commonwealth University Professor Leslie Bullock's graduate students' Golden-winged Warbler project in Highland County.
- Patti recruited landowners to allow the researchers to work on their properties. She also assisted the researchers in the field.
- She was part of a team, along with incoming VSO President Dan Bieker, that erected dozens of American Kestrel nest boxes across Virginia. Of equal importance, she is leading a monitoring project to see how those boxes are being used.
- Presented Kestrel programs to many of Virginia's bird clubs throughout the commonwealth
- Presently spearheading a Kestrel monitoring project in Highland County
- Patti is also an active member and Vice President of the Bath-Highland Bird Club

She does all of the above with dedication, fortitude, grace, and good humor. I've never seen her lose her temper and she always enters her work in good faith. She is focused on getting results, not on her ego, and that makes her one of the most-effective bird conservationists in Virginia. I've been impressed with her dedication and resilience in all of the years I've worked with her.

And the Myriam P. Moore Service Award goes to Bob Ake

The VSO's highest service award is the Myriam P. Moore Award. Instituted in 1983, this award is given to a member in recognition of a very high level of achievement in service areas for 25 or more years and a demonstrated devotion to the principles and objectives of the VSO. This award has been given three times, the first time to Myriam P. Moore at the 1983 Annual Meeting

For over 30 years, from the 1960s through the mid 1990s. Bob Ake could be found at virtually every VSO annual meeting or field trip, often with young birders in tow. He has conducted decades of leading research on raptor migration, as well as held multiple positions in Virginia bird clubs and in the VSO like being a past president of the VSO and actively involved for decades.

Instrumental in starting pelagic birding in VA and NC, he has participated in countless breeding bird forays and actively supported multiple research projects such as the VSO work in the Dominican Republic. He was Chair of Virginia avian Records Committee and instrumental in getting the Database for Ornithological Verification and Submission (DOVES) up-and-running for the VARCOM.

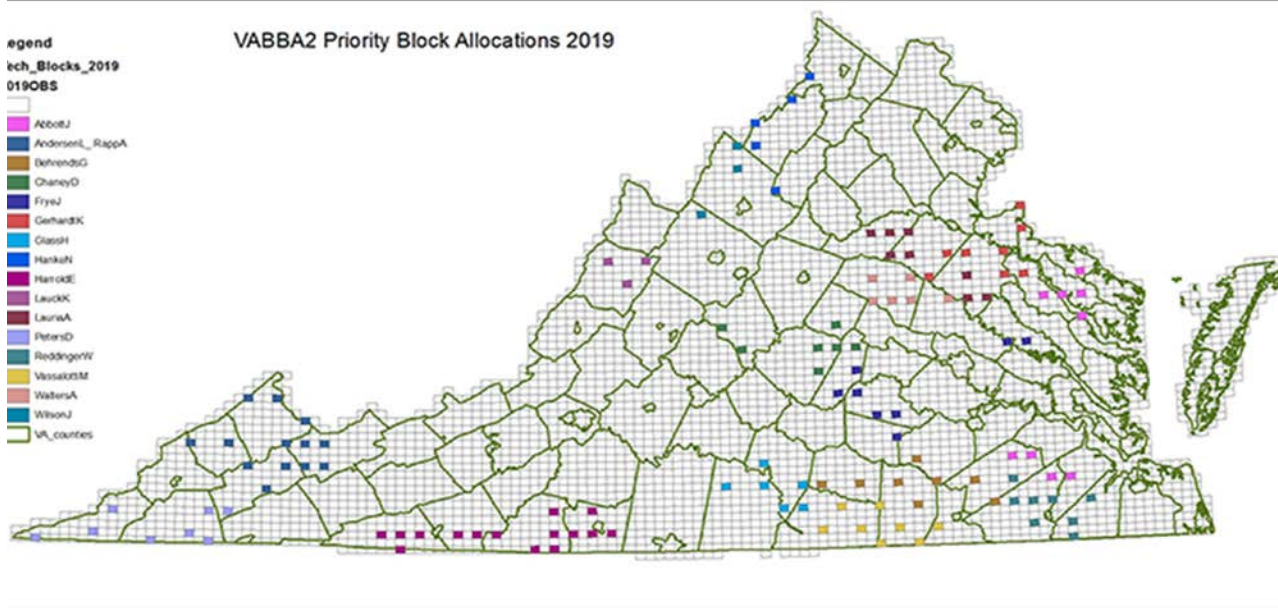
Bob has received the Eike Award, taught Physical Chemistry at ODU, participated in VSO's Roving Ravens at the World Series of Birding, and Regional coordinator for the Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas—just to name a few of his many accomplishments



Lenny presents the Myriam P. Moore Award to Bob Ake

Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2

Stats assembled by Ashley Peele



Created by: Michael St. Germain
Currentness: 29 April 2019



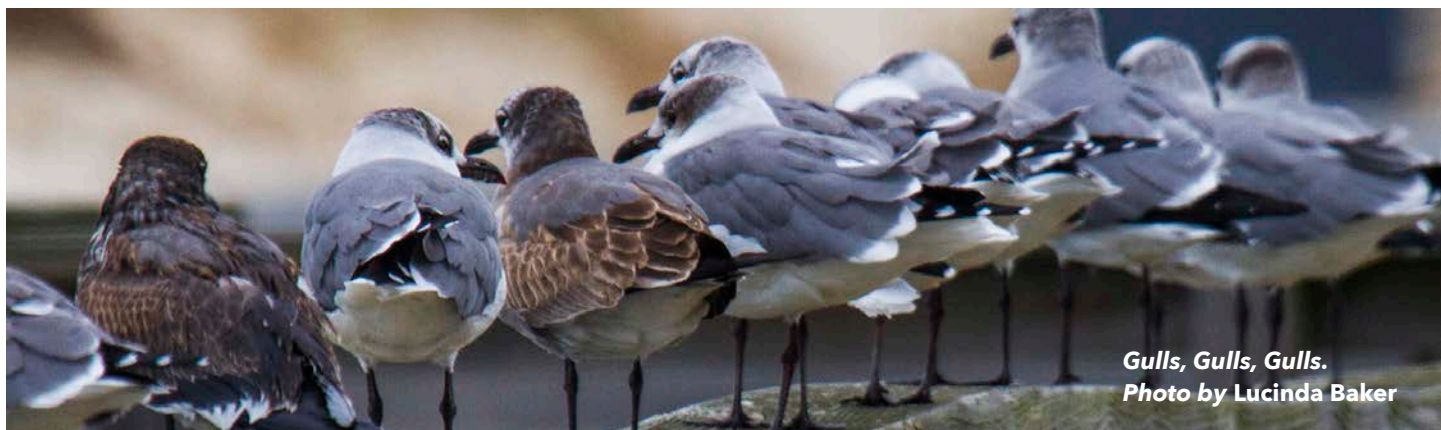
From 1992 through 1996, Rick Blom and I organized one-day winter Gull Day surveys throughout Maryland and DC, including additional sites in Delaware, Virginia, and North Carolina. The survey dates were:

- 18 January 1992
- 23 January 1993
- 29 January 1994
- 28 January 1995
- 10 February 1996 (a rescheduled weather date)

Request for Data: Gull Day 1992-1996

Gene Scarpulla, Editor, *Maryland Birdlife*
ejscarp@comcast.net

Rick (along with his records) passed away in 2002 and all my records were destroyed by Hurricane Isabel in 2003. I'm seeking any surviving data that any survey participants might still have. I've received a good amount of data from Maryland birders that participated in the surveys. I don't remember who participated in the other states. I would like to summarize this data in an article for *Maryland Birdlife*. If you participated in the surveys and still have any data, please e-mail them to me. I thank you for your participation and any help that you can provide.



Gulls, Gulls, Gulls.
Photo by Lucinda Baker

Field Trip Report - Northern Neck June 7-9, 2019

By Meredith Bell, VSO Field Trips Co-Chair

The June 7-9, 2019, VSO field trip to the Northern Neck was a hybrid of traditional summer trips and surveying for breeding birds as part of the second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (VABBA2) project. This area of Virginia is an under-birded region and was in need of more people to cover priority blocks with little data collected to date. The weekend was a great success despite rain on Friday afternoon and Sunday morning.

Thanks to Lauren Cruz, Wildlife Biologist for the Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Friday afternoon we were able to access two units (Taylor and Belle Mont) normally closed to the public. Light rain started shortly after we arrived at Taylor but did not deter our enthusiasm and we were rewarded with great looks at Yellow-breasted Chat, Common Yellowthroat, Orchard Oriole and Summer Tanager. Luckily, we moved on to Belle Mont next because this spot had a building with a large front and back porch where we continued birding as the rain became heavier. From this dry vantage point, we were able to confirm evidence of breeding for Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Chipping Sparrow. Before leaving, we organized into 4 teams to cover 4 priority blocks on Saturday.

We lucked out on Saturday—it was a beautiful day. Each group thoroughly covered their respective block, and we gathered at the end of the day to share highlights.

The enthusiasm of everyone there was rewarding to see and hear! Numbers of species per block that were CONFIRMED ranged from 8 to 14 and PROBABLES from 8 to 26, so we made a significant contribution to data for these priority blocks: Haynesville SE, Machodoc SE, Mount Landing SE and Tappahannock SE.

Due to rain on Sunday, a much smaller group stayed to visit the Wilna Unit. Lee Adams spotted a Wild Turkey hen with chicks after everyone had gone, and another hen with chicks was seen by Guy and Susan Babineau in one of our priority blocks (Mount Landing SE) as they were headed home!

Very special thanks to several individuals who helped ensure we had a successful weekend:

Melissa Gross and Maeve Charlesworth, local birders, gave invaluable suggestions for areas to cover in three of our four priority blocks.

Lee Adams, Sally Knight, and Ellison Orcutt led groups to the priority blocks on Saturday.

Guy Babineau and Wendy Ealding recorded species and submitted checklists real-time. Guy also got up early to check for nightjars. He found a Chuck-Wills-Widow at Montross SE.

Thanks to ALL who attended, for your efforts contributed to a very successful weekend of data collection for the Atlas project!



Belle Mont Unit, Photo by Dianne Snyder



Red-headed Woodpecker, Photo by Doug Rogers

Northern Neck Field Trip Report—continued



Cedar Waxwing. Photo by Doug Rogers



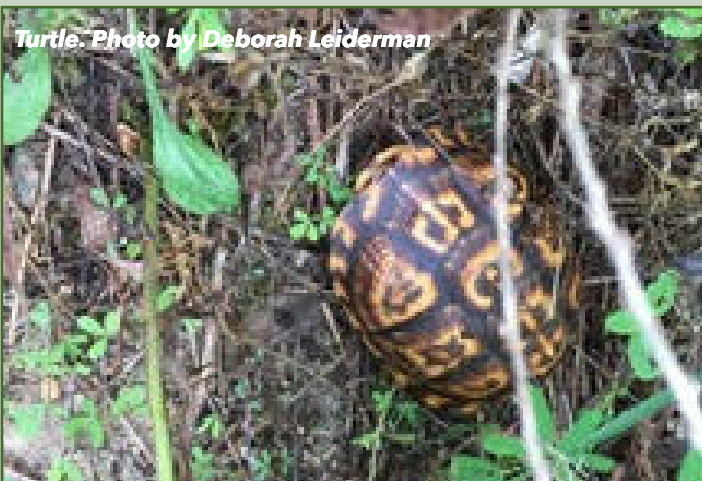
Eastern Kingbird on nest. Photo by Doug Rogers



Eastern Bluebird. Photo by Doug Rogers



Black and White Warbler. Photo by Doug Rogers



Turtle. Photo by Deborah Leiderman



Barn Swallow. Photo by Doug Rogers

VSO Fall Field Trip Chincoteague, VA September 20-22, 2019

Every fall holds surprises at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, so join us to discover what awaits us on this year's annual fall VSO trip, September 20-22, 2019. Last year we had to cancel the trip due to mandatory evacuation in the area for Hurricane Florence, so we're eager to return for this annual favorite!

TRIP REGISTRATION

To help us plan for the weekend, please register in advance. Provide the names of participants in your party with your mobile 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. For more information about the field trip go to www.virginiabirds.org. Here are a few photos to whet your appetite.



Whimbrel
Photo by Doug Pfeiffer



Great Egret
Photo by Doug Pfeiffer

NEW VSO MEMBERS Spring & Summer 2019

WELCOME TO THE NEWEST VSO MEMBERS! WHEN YOU SEE THEM ON A FIELD TRIP, INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND MAKE THEM FEEL WELCOME.

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Anna Alltizer | Narrows, VA |
| Diana Bower | Troy, VA |
| Madelyn Chappel | Locust Grove, VA |
| Jonathan Clark | Salem, VA |
| Matthew Crittende, | N Chesterfield, VA |
| Jane Crone | Fredericksburg, TX |
| Eileen deCamp | Charlottesville, VA |
| Clancey Deel | Richlands, VA |
| Sherri Fitzgerald | Culver City, CA |
| John Foulkes | Salem, VA |
| Allison Gallo | Sterling, VA |
| Stephanie Gasmalla | Woodbridge, VA |
| Lindsey Gilmer | Blacksburg, VA |
| Joy Green | Stafford, VA |
| John Greenwood | Falls Church, VA |
| Rebecca Gwynn | Williamsburg, VA |
| Beth Howell | Burke, VA |
| Taryn Payne | Richmond, VA |
| Frances Raskin | Washington, DC |
| Celia Rutt | McDowell, VA |
| Barbara Saffir | McLean, VA |
| Megan Shuler | Alexandria, VA |
| Katherine Slaughter | Charlottesville, VA |
| Richard Somer | Charlottesville, VA |
| Stephanie Tanner, | Charlottesville, VA |
| Patricia Thacker | Bumpass, VA |
| Carol Winter | Marysville, WA |

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Terms Expire 2021

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New	Renewing	Gift	
___	___	___	Contributing Membership \$60
___	___	___	Sustaining Membership \$35
___	___	___	Family Membership \$25
___	___	___	Active Membership \$20
___	___	___	Student Membership \$10
___	___	___	Life Membership (individual) \$500

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	\$0
Download the latest 2019 list at: www.virginiabirds.org/publications/field-checklist	

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.]

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