



Northern Neck Audubon News

The Northern Neck of Virginia Chapter of the National Audubon Society

P.O. Box 991, Kilmarnock, Virginia 22482

www.northernneckaudubon.org

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September 2012



Together Green Event

Al Brown, Mary Elfner (National Audubon), Jessica Servis, Jim Schmidt, Paula Boundy, Earline Walker and Rebekah Martin (FWS) complete trail work at Laure Grove, Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

September 10 - 4:30 PM

NNAS Annual Picnic
Belle Isle State Park

September 10 - 5:30 PM

Bird Walk following the picnic
Led by Frank Schaff

October 8 - 7:00 PM

Meeting - Grace Church, Kilmarnock
Speaker: Bill Portlock
Birds of the Chesapeake and
Teachers on the Bay 2012

President's Message

Whenever I think of summer birds, besides hummingbirds, goldfinches come immediately to mind. Even though American Goldfinches are here year round, it is in the summer that their cheerful sounds (po ta to chip) and so colorful feathers cheer and brighten a clear or cloudy day. Most of you know that you can attract goldfinches with black oil sunflower and nyjer seeds. What you may not know is that they love many other seeds from native and garden flowers that you can plant. Some of these may be familiar to you, such as *Echinacea purpurea* or Eastern Purple Coneflower and Zinnias. A more unusual native flower that I have enjoyed watching to see which birds use it is *Agastache scrophulariaefolia* or Purple Giant Hyssop. This is a plant that typifies the Goldfinch's habitat, a weedy meadow; however, many pollinators use it - including hummingbirds. The finches eat the seeds, clinging upside down and all around the flower spike, so I have it in my front garden and ignore its weedy appearance.

Another reason Goldfinches catch my fancy is that they are late nesters. That's because they are vegetarians, even as nestlings! Since they do not feed their young insects, like so many other song birds do, they must wait until plants are producing seeds in June or July. An interesting cause and effect results from their being seed eaters, even as nestlings. Any Brown-headed Cowbird that may hatch in a Goldfinch nest will starve.

I hope to see you at the September NNAS picnic and at the Monday night meetings and bird walks as the next season kicks off.

Your Chapter President, Paula Boundy



American Goldfinch. Photo by Paul Servis

Help Wanted!

The Chapter needs volunteers willing to participate in "manning" our educational booth. The "booth" is a collapsible tent, a Northern Neck Audubon sign, a display table and chairs. The "booth" needs transportation to & from storage. A variety of information brochures are available, and birding books and bluebird boxes are sold. This is a wonderful opportunity to share birding experiences with the public and each other.

There are two more Irvington Farmers' Markets - the first on September 1 and the last on October 6.

Volunteers set up the booth by 8:30 AM (the market officially opens at 9:00) and take it down at 1:00 PM. There are two shifts: 8:30 - 11:00 AM and 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM. *(continued on page 5)*

Upcoming Events

NNAS Annual Picnic

When: September 10, 2012, 4:30 PM.

Where: Belle Isle State Park, "Rappahannock" picnic shelter #2, waterfront.

What: Picnic Potluck - bring a dish to share - your choice.

Who: All NNAS membership are invited to the picnic, with complimentary parking.

Why: The NNAS annual picnic potluck kicks off the educational year of presentations and birdwalks on nature and conservation of habitat with a focus on birds and the Northern Neck.

In addition: There will be an evening bird walk led by Frank Schaff following the picnic at approximately 5:30 - 7:00 PM.

Members of the general public are welcome to attend the bird walk. Meet at the Equestrian Center parking lot at 5:30 PM. Loaner binoculars will be available. Non-NNAS members will be charged a parking fee of \$2.00 per car, payable at the park entrance.

October 2012 Monthly Meeting

Birds of the Chesapeake Bay and
Teachers on the Bay 2012.
Speaker Bill Portlock

Bill Portlock is Senior Educator with Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF). Trained in natural history and ecology, he learned to photograph nature in order to document the Chesapeake Bay and the wildlife that lives within its watershed.

Bill has been teaching and conducting field investigations since his start with CBF in 1981. He monitors Virginia's rivers and the Bay for CBF as a water-quality and living-resources specialist, conducts breeding bird surveys for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, is compiler for the Washington's Birthplace Audubon Christmas Bird Count, and conducts Bald Eagle boat surveys for the Center for Conservation Biology, Virginia Commonwealth University, where he is a research associate and adjunct faculty member.

Bill's research and photography have been featured in leading publications, including those of the National Park Service, *National Geographic*, and *American Birds*. His photography is on permanent exhibit in Virginia state parks and the Science Museum of Virginia. Bill has won numerous awards for his contributions in natural science and for his photography.

In Memoriam

On Friday, June 29, a remembrance gathering was held at Currie Funeral Home in Kilmarnock for B. J. Norris of White Stone, who died April 9, 2012.

B. J. Norris served as NNAS President in 1997-1998. She was a master birder and was often called on by many of us for her expertise. B. J. was always willing to share her knowledge and never made novices feel like they were imposing. The establishment of Hickory Hollow, Hughlett Point and Dameron Marsh Natural Areas were among the many projects that B. J. worked on for the benefit of all who live in the Northern Neck of Virginia.

B. J. will be greatly missed by her friends from the Northern Neck Audubon Society.

New Bluebird Trails Installed



This spring we installed a Bluebird box and a Nut-hatch box at our local Montessori School to show our appreciation to Al Pollard for the use of his woodworking shop for NNAS projects.



We also installed a 20-box Bluebird Trail at Grace Hill at the request of its owner, Mr. Bob Sowder. Mr. Sowder purchased the boxes and paid NNAS for the installation. At the time of this photo there were 5 active boxes. This was a great start considering the late installation of the trail. As you can see in the photo above, one Bluebird mama would not move from her eggs during the photographing of her nest.

Help Wanted! (continued from page 2)

In addition to the Farmers Market events, if we have volunteers to take part in another event, NNAS would like to have a booth at the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge's (RRVNWR) annual 'Go Wild' event on October 14 from 1:00 - 5:00 PM. 'Go Wild' is held at the Hutchinson Tract of the RRVNWR, just north of Tappahannock. A free lunch is in the offering! This event could also be split into shifts as necessary to allow our "staff" to participate in the activities scheduled that day.

If you are interested in any of these volunteer activities, please send e-mail to Paula.Boundy@va.metrocast.net.

Thanks in advance!

Past Events

May Monthly Meeting

Program: Wild Turkeys & the Northern Neck Wild Turkey Association

The May 2012 program featured two speakers: Stephen Proctor, a longtime member of the Northern Neck Wild Turkey Association (NNWTA); and Susan O'Hara Christopher, a retired educator/counselor and current Educational Outreach Coordinator for NNWTA.

The program provided much interesting information about the wild turkey population in the Northern Neck and outlined how the NNWTA is teaching responsible hunting of turkeys as well as conservation of habitat for the birds. The organization provides scholarships, fellowships, plantings, and youth programs, and engages in many other activities.

The program included drawing for door prizes, provided by NNWTA, for a few lucky attendees of the May NNAS program.

**June 2012 Monthly Meeting
The Birds of Central Virginia**

Dr. Marshall Faintich is the official photographer and the senior birding editor for the Rockfish Valley Trail. During the June 2012 NNAS meeting he presented a slide show of his beautiful photographs of birds and provided details about the various species as well as the challenges in photographing them.

Dr. Faintich's field reports and many of his photos can be seen on his web site: <http://www.symbolicmessengers.com/blog.htm>.

Dr. Faintich is the author of *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Wintergreen*, and he brought some copies of his book for those who wanted to purchase an autographed copy.

New Members

Please welcome these new members to our chapter. Give them a special 'Hello' when you see them at our meetings and walks.

- Vanessa Hummel
- June Nadel
- William Richards
- Patricia and Robert Sikora
- Ann Whitney



INJURED BIRDS

Diana O' Conner - 804-313-2240

INJURED ANIMALS

Nancy Johnston - 804-435-3040

Application for Membership in NNAS - Chapter Code X50, 7XCH

- Local Chapter Only Membership - \$15.00 annually, renewable in June; includes local newsletter and directory.
- National & Local Membership - \$20.00 introductory (\$35.00 after), is above, plus glossy National Audubon Magazine.
 Make checks payable to "National Audubon Society".

Name _____ Phone _____ - _____

Address _____ E-Mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



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