



# January 2011 Newsletter

*Celebrating 54 Years  
of Birding! 1957-2011*

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Visit our club's website:  
[www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com](http://www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com)

## DECEMBER MEETING

Andrew Dolby, Associate Professor of Biology at the University of Mary Washington and current VSO Vice President, gave an interesting presentation on foraging strategies and behavioral adaptations exhibited by birds in cold climates.



*Marvelous spatuletail* by Bill Ahlman©

## **Huembo Reserve In Peru: A Recipient of Peggy Spiegel Opengari Memorial Fund**

The marvelous spatuletail, one of the rarest hummingbirds in the world, has only been recorded in the Huembo Reserve and surrounding area in northern Peru. The principal threat to this spectacular bird is the destruction and fragmentation of its habitat caused by the illegal harvesting of wood and the clearing of land for agriculture by fire. Other threats to the spatuletail include invasive species and the hunting and the capture of birds for illegal sale.

Monies from the Fund will be used to help pay for guards and management. A *mirador* which looks out over Huembo and the surrounding area will have benches and a plaque in honor of Peggy Spiegel Opengari. The photo above shows the view from this lookout (photo was taken early in construction). The Huembo Reserve was established in 2006 by the American Bird Conservancy and Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos.

*Donations to the Peggy Spiegel Opengari Memorial Fund* can be mailed to the Roanoke Valley Bird Club c/o Robin Austin, 10513 Bottom Creek Rd., Bent Mountain, VA 24059 with a notation that it's for the Peggy Spiegel Opengari Memorial Fund.

## NEXT MEETING:

January 10, 7:00 p.m.  
Grandin Court Baptist  
Church

We'll watch a video by Don And Lillian Stokes titled *Attracting Birds - Birdfeeders, Birdhouses and Birdbaths*. Lots of good info for novice and experienced birders alike.

*Please join us for dinner before the meeting at 5:30 p.m. at the Brambleton Deli at 3655 Brambleton Road.*



*Mirador* at Huembo Reserve

## FIELD TRIPS

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CHAIRMAN **BETH GRIFFIN** 265-4853

SHARE THE COST OF GAS WHEN YOU CARPOOL

### January 22, 9:00 AM, Booker T Washington National Monument

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Join leader Bill Hunley (774-2397) for a morning walk in search of woodland birds. There's a possibility that we'll see brown-headed nuthatches. Expect about a mile of easy walking. Meet Bill at the Monument at 9:00 am. If you wish to carpool from Roanoke, meet Beth Griffin (265-4853) under the sign at Tanglewood Mall at 8:00 am.

### Backyard Birders Wanted

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We are trying to get together a backyard birding field trip for February. If you have good feeder/backyard birds and would be willing to host the bird club for part of a morning, contact Beth Griffin at 265-4853. We are looking for two to three hosts in the Roanoke/Salem area.

### Reminder: Look For Rusty Blackbirds, Jan. 29-Feb. 13

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The Rusty Blackbird Blitz takes place January 29th to February 13th. Get out and find some. (Details in RVBC December issue)

### Annual Raptor Count, Feb. 5

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Plan to spend a few hours driving away the winter blues on Saturday, February 5. The annual Raptor Count is a great excuse to get out of the house and do some winter birding with your birding buddies.



The New River Valley Bird Club even participates in this event. You should too!

No skill is required, just a little time and effort. Plan on a leisurely drive around your area, counting all the different hawks you see. Points are awarded for each hawk, although this is not a serious competition. The winner gets bragging rights! We compile the results from everyone's efforts and keep an eye on trends in hawk populations. This event is just an excuse to get out during the winter and do some birding!

In the unlikely event of inclement weather, an alternate date of Saturday, February 19 has been set. Contact Anne Tucker (540) 721-1573 if you have any questions. The completed tally sheet can be emailed to [billt3256@gmail.com](mailto:billt3256@gmail.com) or mailed to Anne Tucker, 3256 Lakewood Forest Rd. Moneta VA 24121.

If you need help with raptor ID, please download and print the North East Hawkwatch Raptor ID Guide: [http://roanokevalleybirdclub.com/NEHW\\_Hawk\\_Guide\\_08.pdf](http://roanokevalleybirdclub.com/NEHW_Hawk_Guide_08.pdf)

## SIGHTINGS

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At the December meeting, Butch Kelly reported sighting 34 wild turkeys in his yard, and Mary Lou Agee reported seeing 65 mourning doves on her property.

*Harvey's Knob Hawkwatch:* All-time high records of bald eagle and broad-winged hawk sightings were set this year. Also a record high of over 15,000 birds were recorded—with fewer hawkwatcher hours than in some past years.

*Screech Owl sighting noted in December's newsletter:* Laurie Greer was the clubmember who had spotted a screech owl in a barn.

*Dec. 1:* Carl Boast sighted a pair of hooded mergansers in the cove near his home at Smith Mountain Lake.

*Dec. 5:* Liz Cole reported a fox sparrow foraging below the feeder. A first on her property in Rocky Mount.

*Dec 12 report on va-bird@listserv.com:* A hatch-year female Allen's hummingbird, originally thought to be a female rufous hummingbird was banded and released in Chester by Bruce Peterjohn and David Holmes from Laurel, Maryland. The hummingbird was first seen on Nov. 20 feeding on Mexican sage. After being sighted, feeders were placed in the garden. She weighed 3.88 grams and had some significant feather wear. She was successfully released after being studied and banded (the hummer was still in Chester on Dec. 26).

*Dec. 16:* Eunice Hudgins reported a fox sparrow at her feeder in Salem.



Fox Sparrow by Mark Mullins ©

### Christmas Bird Count Sightings

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Sightings of note during the recent Christmas Bird Counts:

*Roanoke CBC:* (1) trumpeter swan, (1) merlin, (2) bald eagles, (2) brown-headed nuthatches, (\*) wood ducks, (\*) American pipits, and (1)



Northern Shoveler - Jim Stevenson ©

palm warbler.

*Fincastle CBC:* (1) gray catbird, (1) red-headed woodpecker, (1) brown thrasher, (50) American pipits, (11) horned larks, (2) bald eagles, and (2) northern shovelers.

*Peaks of Otter CBC:* (40) species of the possible fifty found. Highlights included: (1) American kestrel, (3) purple finches, (1) swamp sparrow, (13) red-breasted nuthatches, (1) winter wren, (4) yellow-rumped warblers, (13) hermit thrush, (1) ruby crowned kinglet, (8) golden-crowned kinglets, (1) cedar waxwing, and (2) brown creepers.

*\* unknown number sighted*

## Great Backyard Bird Count, Feb. 18-21

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event.

It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. Patterns detected in GBBC data are used to alert scientists to particular species or questions that may require more detailed followup studies.

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. You can count for longer than that if you wish. Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day. You can also submit more than one checklist per day if you count in other locations on that day.

2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time. You may find it helpful to print out a regional bird checklist: <http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/checklist> to get an idea of the kinds of birds you're likely to see in your area in February. You could take note of the highest number of each species you see on this checklist.

3. When you're finished, enter your results through the GBBC Website: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/> You'll see a button marked "Enter Your Checklists!" on the website home page beginning on the first day of the count. It will remain active until the deadline for data submission on March 1st.



The GBBC has a nifty poster that you can download and print at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/GBBCBrochure.8by11.pdf> Ask your local schools, stores, or library if you can put up flyers about the event.

For more information about the count, visit: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

## Golden Eagle Rescue

It's not often that the Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research Wild Bird Clinic admits a golden eagle patient. This unique bird, one of scarcely a handful ever cared for at Tri-State came to them in critical condition in October.

The eagle, presumably hit by a car, was found along the road in north central Pennsylvania by a couple who immediately notified the state's Game Commission. The officer rushed the bird to a veterinary office for emergency surgery to close life-threatening wounds suffered to his neck and crop.

Recovery was gradual, and as he got stronger he was moved to a 200 foot U-shaped cage for exercise and release conditioning. After a final examination, he was given a permanent metal band and returned to Pennsylvania on November 23rd to reclaim his destiny as a wild bird.

For more information about Tri-State, visit: <http://www.tristatebird.org/>



# WINTER RAPTOR COUNT

February 5, 2011

Participants \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time started \_\_\_\_\_ Time completed \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>NOTES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
TURKEY VULTURE	1*			
BLACK VUTURE	2*			
RED-TAILED HAWK	5			
AMERICAN KESTREL	10			
SCREECH OWL	10**			
RAVEN	10			
COOPER'S HAWK	20			
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK	20			
LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE	50			
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK	30			
GREAT HORNED OWL	30			
BARRED OWL	35			
BARN OWL	50			
NORTHERN HARRIER	40			
SHORT-EARED OWL	75			
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK	75			
GOLDEN EAGLE	100			
BALD EAGLE	50			
PEREGRINE FALCON	75			
MERLIN	75			
GOSHAWK	100			
LONG-EARED OWL	125			
SAW-WHET OWL	125			
NORTHERN SHRIKE	150			
UNIDENTIFIED RAPTOR	5			

POINT TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

\* Maximum 50 Points

\*\*Maximum 100 Points

However, keep your totals. There is a 10 point bonus on peak counts for these three species.

**RULES:** Teams may bird any area within 100 mile radius of Woodpecker Ridge. Birds must be seen or heard by at least 50%(minimum of 2) of team members. Count period not to exceed twelve hours.

The completed tally sheet can be emailed to [billt3256@gmail.com](mailto:billt3256@gmail.com) or mailed to Anne Tucker, 3256 Lakewood Forest Rd. Moneta VA 24121.

Contact Anne (540) 721-1573 if you have questions.

