



THE DRUMMER

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RUSSELL COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Editor-Dave Worley

MEETINGS ARE THE 4TH TUESDAY
AT THE LEBANON COMMUNITY ROOM
AT 7:30 PM

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MEETING: Our last meeting was a big hit with those who attended. Bob had wings, feathers and even some mounted Ducks. We learned about the names of the various feathers and how they helped the bird fly.

HAPPENINGS: Ben and Ellen Ames have been very busy this winter. Shortly after Christmas they were in Antigua, where they saw lots of Magnificent Frigatebirds. In January, they biked through Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, near Ft. Meyers, Florida. On Saturday, January 27th, they flew to Ecuador with friends and then on to the Galapagos Islands. We will be looking forward to a future program by the Ames.

January 29th, Tom & Laverne Hunter, Bob Riggs and Dave Worley drove to the St. Louis area. They birded in the Riverlands Demonstration Area. A property along the Mississippi River that is maintained by the Army Corp of Engineers. The trip was made to see a Smew. They were not disappointed as they had excellent looks at the Smew. It was a life bird for all. Other life birds for at least one of them included, Eurasian Tree Sparrows (all), Glaucous Gull (all), American Tree Sparrow (Dave), Snowy Owl (Tom) and Trumpeter Swans (Tom & Laverne). Dave saw his largest ever flock of Bald Eagles, 37 on the ice, 2 in a tree and 1 flying over. Forty at once was quite a sight.

They saw thousands of Common Goldeneyes, Common Mergansers and Canvasbacks. Of course they saw lots of gulls and other species. They returned home on the 30th, after an 1100 mile round trip.

A Northern Pintail was spotted at Elk Garden, Mute Swans are hanging around the Blackford bridge on the Clinch River. Lots of other ducks are moving through the area.

Feb. 10th found Tom & Laverne Hunter at Musicks Campground where they saw Common Merganser, Pied-billed and Horned Grebes. From there they went to the Wier Dams and Osceola Island, where they saw a Redhead and lots of Buffleheads and American Widgeons.

PRESIDENTS' CORNER: The bird flushed from the tall fescue and my first thoughts were of a Red-shouldered Hawk. Then the short-tailed, big head, no neck appearance sank in and I started hopping around as I knew this was a Short-eared Owl. (*Asio flammeus*) What an exciting find. I watch as the owl flapped above the strip, circled once and landed in a tree. We observed each other for a while, the feathers on its forehead, which probably gave the owl its name, rising once or twice. After thirty minutes, I pulled myself away and walked the half-mile to call some folks and let them know the owl was there. I had felt it was only a matter of time before someone located a Short-eared Owl on one of these strip jobs. The habitat was there and we were seeing plenty of Northern Harriers, which share this habitat. This owl is a day hunter and is fairly easy to locate due to their territorial behavior during the winter.

This bird has been located again, by Roger Mayhorn and myself, in the same area. It will probably stay in the area until it leaves for its breeding grounds. I hope you will take this opportunity to see this rare winter visitor to Russell County. I do not believe you will be disappointed in the show. It is on the Laurel Creek strip job; if you need directions call me. See you in the field.

Bob Riggs

FIELD TRIP: February 17th, we will make a trip to Burkes Garden. We will leave Food City at Lebanon at 8:00 a. m. We will be joined by members of the Bristol Bird Club, and a couple from Crozet, Virginia. Lunch will be cooked at the Sportsman Club shelter. We hope to see lots of eagles and some Rough-legged Hawks, even some Red-headed Woodpeckers. This is an annual trip and we always have a great time and see lots of our feathered friends. Please join us and help make this a fabulous outing.

MEETING: Our next meeting will be Feb. 27th, at the usual time and place. The program will be presented by Bob Riggs. Do not miss it.

I always need more articles for the newsletters. Please call me at 880-1373 or 1374 with your information. Any thing that interests you will be of use.