



THE DRUMMER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
RUSSELL COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Editor-Dave Worley

MEETINGS ARE THE 4TH TUESDAY

AT THE LEBANON COMMUNITY ROOM

AT 7:30 PM

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 2 FEBRUARY 2002

MEETING: At the last meeting we took quizzes from the Birds of North America CD. We used pictures, songs and range maps to pick the correct bird.

HAPPENINGS: Tom Hunter, Dave Worley and Bob Riggs birded the Tidewater area of Virginia on January 31 and February 1st. & 2nd.

At Craney Island in Portsmouth we saw a Snowy Owl. Bob also had 2 Peregrine Falcons there. On the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel islands we had Long-tailed Duck, Brant, Harlequin Duck, Red-necked Grebe and American Oystercatchers. At Chincoteague NWR, we had all three scoters, Little Blue Heron and Brown-headed Nuthatches.

Tom & Laverne Hunter were back in Portsmouth on 12 February and saw the Snowy Owl, but were unable to find the reported Eurasian Wigeon in Virginia Beach.

February 16th the annual Burkes Garden field trip attracted 33 people from four area birding clubs. The clubs represented were Russell County, Bristol, Buchanan and Elizabethton, Tennessee. It was a beautiful sunny day with a brisk wind. It was actually to pretty, the birds were not flying. The fellowship was fabulous and the food excellent. We had 2 Golden Eagles and 1 Rough-legged Hawk, along with 35 other species. Of special note were Gadwall, Horned Larks, Wild Turkey, Ravens, Hooded Merganser and Red-headed Woodpeckers.

February 17th Tom Hunter had 1 perched Golden Eagle at Elk Garden, later in the day he along with Bob & Jean Montgomery saw 3 Golden Eagles and 10 Ravens at the intersection of Rt. 80 and Rt. 656. Later he and Laverne found 10 Rusty Blackbirds. They also had 9 Purple Finches at their feeder.

Woodcocks are doing their thing. The flights are always entertaining.

Check all the marshy areas for Swamp Sparrows.

PRESIDENTS' CORNER: A Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) was found January 12, 2002 sitting alongside state route 624. The injured owl was picked up and taken finally to Dr. Rucker at Southwest Virginia Vet Clinic. An exam determined that it had broken its ulna bone in the right wing. The bone was set and healed in a satisfactory manner that allowed the owl to regain its flight capability. After a few days in the flight pens in Grayson County to regain its strength, it was returned to Russell County for release. Friday, February 8th a few of us gathered at the same place it was found to release it. The excitement built as we approached the release site just before dark. This time was chosen because crows would be on their roost and nocturnal animals were starting to prowl, a perfect time for owls. The owl was placed on a low limb where it started looking around to get its bearings. It first flew into a close treetop then finally into the woods. The owl never knew how lucky it was, most injured birds are never released back to the wild. Even when transported to a vet it is usually too late to save the bird. The lucky ones who saw this release took part in a very special moment.

See you in the field.

Bob Riggs

Meeting: NO regular meeting for February. We let the field trip count as the meeting this month, since Dave Worley, Bob Riggs and Tom Hunter will be in Florida at meeting time.

DUES: If your name on the newsletter, address portion is highlighted, you have not paid the 2002 dues and are now delinquent. Send a check for \$8.00 to Diana Worley PO Box 153 Rosedale, Va. 24280. Make the check to Diana with RCBC dues in the memo section.

Happenings: Bob Riggs, Tom Hunter and Dave Worley are leaving for a 9day trip to Florida. They have planned a pelagic trip from Key West to the Dry Tortugas. Spots to be birded are Lake Kissimmee, Miami, Sanibel Island, Everglades and anywhere they can squeeze in during their stay. A report will be here next month.