



THE RED-BELLIED NEWSLETTER

Monthly Update of the Margaret Watson Bird Club

Mark your calendar:

Jan. 7 (Su) - Darlington Hts CBC

6:45am @ Fire Department

5:30pm @ Tina Wells'

**Jan. 20 (S) - Sandy River Reservoir
and Briery Creek Lake**

7am @ SRR Boat Ramp

Feb. 1 (Th) - Mike Roberts:

Prothonotary Warbler Research

6:40pm @ Farmville-Prince Edward
Community Library

Breeding Bird Atlas Info

Believe it or not, some of our local birds are already gearing up for breeding season. The most obvious species to pair up in January is the Bald Eagle, but also be on the lookout for raptors of all kinds and owls.

These large birds fledge their young early to coincide with the spring flush of baby rodents leaving their dens.

Please send an email to margaretwatsonbirdclub@gmail.com if you observe courtship behavior of these species, locate a nest, or hear owls calling in the night. This is valuable information for our Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2!



Christmas Bird Count

The Darlington Heights Christmas Bird Count will take place on January 7, 2018 starting at 7am at the Darlington Heights Fire Department. Please confirm your participation in the Darlington Heights Christmas Bird Count with your quadrant captains. **Plan to meet at the fire department at 6:45am. Bring all you need to bird the entire day, including warm clothes, drinks and food.**

We will meet at 5:30pm at Tina Wells' house (2806 Bloomfield Rd.) and tally our species at 6pm. All bird club members and friends are welcome to dinner, as this gathering replaces our January meeting.

Trivia: The warbler pictured above is our single winter-only warbler. It's colored rump gives away its name!

Just a note...

Hello bird friends!

The book that is featured in the Book Nook just happens to be the one that was under my Christmas tree when Santa had come and gone. Lucky me!

If you're not familiar with Julie Zickefoose and her work, you can quickly get up to speed on her blog:

www.juliezickefoose.blogspot.com

She is a watercolor artist turned biologist and has dedicated the past 30 years to the observation and study of birds. As a registered wildlife rehabilitator, she had a first-person view of baby birds in nests, the parents of which had perished or abandoned them, for the making of this incredible book.

If you don't follow her but the name sounds familiar, it's likely because you've heard me say it. She is the one who inspires my sermons on the importance of feeding protein in moderation to fat in the winter months, when bugs are scarce.

See here: <http://juliezickefoose.blogspot.com/2010/03/zick-dough-improved.html>

Check her out!

Did you get anything "birdie" in your stocking this year? I'd love to know!



Volunteers Needed

March Work Day

Our February work day has been changed to March to accommodate schedules. On **March 3**, we will meet at the Lookofsky's to construct Prothonotary Warbler nest boxes and sew bird seed shopping bags. We need one or two volunteers who are comfortable doing basic woodworking to help build the boxes, and the same number of sewing volunteers. Please check in with the Lookofsky's if you are able to attend.

Mounting PRWA Nest Boxes

Once the Prothonotary Warbler nest boxes are constructed, we need a team of volunteers to help install them on local bodies of water. If you are willing to do this, please contact Amanda. This will be a wet and muddy chore, so kayaks/canoes and waders are helpful. These must be installed by **March 30** to ensure that they are in place before the birds arrive, so we are aiming for a tentative date of March 24.

Book Nook

If you've ever wondered what goes on in bird nests, or what happens after a fledgling leaves the nest, come along on Julie's sensitive exploration of often-uncharted ornithological ground.

This beautiful book is as much an art book as it is a natural history, something readers have come to expect from Julie Zickefoose. More than 400 watercolor paintings show the breathtakingly swift development of seventeen different species of wild birds. Sixteen of those species nest on Julie's wildlife sanctuary, so she knows the birds intimately, and writes about them with authority.

