



# MORE THAN AN ATLAS: THE VIRGINIA BREEDING BIRD BOOK



By

Roger B. Clapp and Claudia J. Angle, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Biological Survey Unit, National Museum of Natural History  
P.O. Box 37012, Washington, DC 20013-7012

The “Breeding Birds of Virginia” is a work in progress. The finished product will include significant recent data both on bird distribution and aspects of their breeding biology relevant to species in Virginia. No “book” on the breeding birds of Virginia has been produced since 1913 so this work will also include material gathered on migration and nesting making it the most complete work on Virginia’s breeding birds.



## MIGRATION

Information about migration periods and peaks included in this book were compiled from many sources:.

- Observations retrieved from web sources between 1996-2006. (23.5 megabytes worth)
- Information from PWRC especially Biological Survey migration data on arrivals and departures.
- Data from an annotated bibliography of Virginia birds. (3.8 megabytes)

Examples of data that can help researchers and birders predict the best dates to locate certain species with some precision.

- Golden-winged Warbler, numbers peaking 4-7 May in Spring and 7-12 September in Fall.
- Gray-cheeked Thrush, numbers peaking 10-12 May in Spring and 24-29 September in Fall.



## BREEDING DATA

Information on breeding bird data includes early and late nesting dates, peak periods for egg laying, nests with young, and fledglings. These data were compiled from various sources such as:

- Nesting data retrieved from web sources with 2-4 lines per nest entry. (6.2 megabytes)
- The unpublished notes of Charles O. Handley, Sr., Edwin O. Willis, and Fred M. Jones.
- Well over 3000 nest records collected by R. Clapp between 1990-2005. (4.7 megabytes of data available)
- Unpublished data from North American Nest Records Program, PWRC, and 50+ correspondents in Virginia.

Famous quote on migration by Roger Clapp:

*“I WISH I COULD GO BUT I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH LEAVE TO GO ON MIGRATION.”*



## INFORMATION AFTER THE VIRGINIA ATLAS PROJECT

This book includes new material such as mapped locations of new and unusual breeding records after 1989:

- Mississippi Kite  
1<sup>st</sup> breeding record in Northern Va in 1995,  
1<sup>st</sup> breeding record in Southern Va in 2005
- Eurasian Collared-Dove  
1<sup>st</sup> breeding record in 2002
- Spotted Sandpiper  
4<sup>th</sup> breeding record for Piedmont in 2002
- Swamp Sparrow  
1<sup>st</sup> breeding of coastal race in 2002,  
nest found in 2005
- Bobolink  
1<sup>st</sup> breeding for Coastal Plain 1999

This book reflects changes in populations based on individual observations and the Breeding Bird Survey:

- + Increased breeding of Savannah Sparrows and Bobolinks
- + Bald Eagle population septupled
- + Canada Goose population tripled
- + Tree Swallow populations quadrupled
- Extirpation of Bewick's Wren as breeding species
- Loggerhead Shrike, too few to calculate change
- Northern Bobwhite population decline by two-thirds
- House Sparrow populations declined by two-thirds with rate increasing
- Field Sparrow populations declined by more than one-half