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## Goldfinch Gazette

### The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<http://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLI

Number 10

June 2016

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#### JUNE MEETING

**DATE:** Thursday, June 2, 2016

**TIME:** 7:00 PM

**PLACE:** Detwiler Auditorium, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, 1501 Virginia Avenue, Harrisonburg, VA 22802

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#### **PROGRAM - *Denise Hoodock***

“NO BIRD LEFT BEHIND 2016!” Join our own Rockingham Bird Club birders/photographers Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski on Thursday, June 2nd, as they share photos, adventures, and experiences of June 2015 through May 2016. Greg and Diane’s presentation will feature Rockingham and surrounding areas, along with a few adventures from places afar. They hope to share not just photos but their birding enthusiasm, along with site-specific highlights to help new birders and/or birders new to the locale enjoy and appreciate the birds that grace our area. No bird left behind—residents, migrants, breeders, and winter residents are all guaranteed equal coverage!

Before the meeting, please join Diane and Greg for dinner at 5:30 PM at Oriental Cafe, 563 University Blvd in Harrisonburg. If you would like to attend, please contact Denise Hoodock, cell 703-216-5499 or by email [dhodock@gmail.com](mailto:dhodock@gmail.com).

**NOTE:** During our June meeting, we will raffle off a bird feeder to raise funds for the club. Anne Neilsen has generously donated a Droll Yankees squirrel proof bird feeder and shelter. This is a very nice feeder, valued at over \$100. Please come prepared to purchase your raffle tickets. We will draw the winning ticket at the end of the meeting. The cost of one ticket is \$10 or 2 for \$15.

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#### **JUNE FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski***

**Hillandale Park, Monday, June 20 with Tom Mizell** – Summer arrives at 6:34 AM and Tom is hoping to start the walk around 5:45 AM which is about sunrise time. It’s been a while since we had a two season walk during one outing. Time will be confirmed and communicated.

**Cub Run Road, George Washington National Forest, Saturday June 4** – Lisa Perry & Diane Lepkowski: We’ll car-bird up Massanutten Mountain’s eastern slope, then hike the same Breeding Bird Survey route we traveled last year. This year, we will log birds for the VA Breeding Bird Atlas project; with Lisa our Atlas Regional Co-Chair, this will be a great chance to learn more about Atlas reporting.

Targets include Prairie Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat and Yellow-billed Cuckoo; Red Crossbills are possible. For those wishing to hike after car-birding, we'll travel about 3 miles on a sometimes-rocky but just mildly strenuous trail (rocky in places, and about 500-600' elevation gain.) Bring snacks, water, and lunch if you wish. Please sign up in advance -- contact Diane (432-1047, [dianelep1@yahoo.com](mailto:dianelep1@yahoo.com)) or Lisa ([koerner.lisa@gmail.com](mailto:koerner.lisa@gmail.com)) and meet at Kohl's parking lot (Rt. 33, east of Harrisonburg) at 7:30 AM to carpool. We'll return by early afternoon. For those interested just in car-birding, targets include Prairie Warbler and Chat.

**Union Springs, TBA** - Greg Moyers will lead a trip to Union Springs to listen for Whip-poor-wills and Chuck-will's-widows. Time and day to be announced. Meet at the Food Lion parking lot on Rt. 42 south at 7:00 PM. Please contact Greg at [gwmoyers@msn.com](mailto:gwmoyers@msn.com) or 434-3029 if you plan to attend.

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## TRIP REPORTS

### **May Hillandale Walks** – *Tom Mizell*

After about two weeks of much needed precipitation why would one be surprised by more rain? On 9 May 2016 it began to rain about 7:30 AM as I drove by Dayton. By the time I arrived at Hillandale Park I was greeted by umbrellas of various colors and familiar faces peering out of rain coats and hoods at the shelter near the Children's Playground. Our one species wish list showed Kentucky Warbler, and "to quit raining". With rain pelting the roof we decided we would strike out towards the cabin and if the rain got too far out of hand we would swim to one of the shelters for a variation of lawn chair birding.

Initial birds seen or heard before we left the dry shelter included: Blue Jay, American and Fish Crows, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Common Grackle, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Flicker and a Wood Thrush. Our feet quickly became wet even though Phyllis Showalter led us through the lowest stands of grass to get to the gravel trail. After we crossed the pedestrian bridge a Northern Cardinal quite appropriately began singing what one of the group said was "Wet, wet, wet, wet!" Around the cabin we added American Robin, Mallards, Indigo Bunting, Field Sparrow, European Starling, Gray Catbird and Mourning Dove.

The rainfall was fairly intense as we splashed along towards the Northwest corner. A Woodpecker sounded off and Susan Phillips spotted a large bird perched in a tall Oak tree. A water-soaked Turkey Vulture looked at us and then at the golfers that were out in the downpour as the distinctive "ping call" of Titlelist or Maxfli sounded close by. What was that TV pondering? Close to the northern trail bridge Karen Shank heard a Northern Parula, our first warbler of the day. Downpour drove us quickly to the closest shelter and by 9 AM we were under roof again. Birding activity came to a standstill as the raindrops fell. We remained at the shelter about a half hour and then the rain stopped. (WSVA radio reported ¼ inch of rain for the morning). During that time we added Downy Woodpecker and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher raising our total species to 22.

About 9:30 our chaperone, 3 year-old Addisyn said "Let's go guys" and we headed down the trail that connects shelter 13 with the stream channel. That was good leadership by Addisyn as we soon found Carolina Chickadee, Chimney Swifts, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and at least two Black-and-white Warblers in the overhead canopy. Walking along the stream channel we

added White-throated Sparrow and American Redstart by 9:50. A Common Yellowthroat called numerous times from across the channel and we walked downstream for several hundred feet before brief glimpses of the illusive bird. Along this trek we heard Red-eyed Vireo, saw what may have been a Loon fly over, and added American Goldfinches and Barn Swallows as the sun broke through.

Along the south loop trail we enjoyed the song of the Northern Mockingbird, heard a trill of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and then enjoyed watching the male Grosbeak hop from branch to branch as it fed overhead.

Eastern Bluebird, House Finches, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Brown Thrasher and Chestnut-sided Warbler rounded out our morning to 42 species. We completed our trek at 11:07 AM as Carolina Wrens loudly sang “come back soon.”

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On a rainy Friday 13, 2016, eleven members of the Rockingham Bird Club arrived at Hillandale Park. Hearing some bird song amidst a downpour we initially decided to gather in Shelter 13 to look for birds while under-roof and to wait out the rain. After about 10 minutes of “shelter birding”, the optimism of these rain braving folks was such that before I knew it we were somehow drawn out of the shelter. Were we hypnotized? I'm not sure but even with rain still falling about half the group convinced the rest of us there were indeed birds waiting along the trail to be seen. Soon Chestnut-sided Warblers and American Redstarts had us looking up as rain droplets touched our faces. As we approached the Northwest corner pedestrian bridge we picked up Eastern Towhee and Wood Peewee, Blackpoll and Magnolia Warblers and Gray Catbird. Singing in the rain were American Robins, Carolina Wrens, Tufted Titmice, and Northern Cardinals. Blue Jays, American and Fish Crows, European Starlings and Common Grackles added their own unique rain “songs” as we wrapped up the first hour with 25 species.

Other first hour highlights included: Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Northern Parula, Veery, Red-eyed Vireo, Downy Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher and Yellow-billed Cuckoo (we understand why it is sometimes called Rain Crow). We spent several minutes at the Northwest Corner enjoying about a dozen species sharing the canopy. In this second hour the rain ended and the sun appeared. We approached the cabin from the opposite direction from our normal walks. The flyover sightings included Coopers and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Turkey Vultures, Chimney Swift, and Mallards. By about 10 AM we found Indigo Bunting and Cedar Waxwing sharing the same Cedar Tree near the log cabin. We then quickly circled the southern loop and found ourselves again at the cabin bridge by 10:15 AM. Five of the original 11 rain warriors remained. Two decided to take the high road and walk back along the golf course boundary from the cabin to the NW corner while the other 3 decided to walk along the east side of the stream channel also toward the NW corner. The group of two found Swainson's Thrush and Black-and-white Warbler. The other three sighted a Brown Thrasher and soon caught up with the two at the small concrete slab. Together we enjoyed Nashville Warbler and a flycatcher species along with a striking Magnolia Warbler.

Three departed around 11 AM. Don Perkuchin and I just did not want to quit. A noise from near the NW corner much like a squirrel but a bit different, beckoned us. Then the ratchet like noise and various chirps and whistles and toots. We walked close to the woods edge just on the north side of the bridge. More chirps and whistles about eye level in the brush along the fence boundary. Then we saw

the rich yellow. A Yellow-breasted Chat conversed with us for at least 10 minutes and we were both afforded excellent views. There is nothing quite like hearing, pursuing and then seeing a Chat face to face. We tallied 47 species for the morning.

Ten more minutes: As Don and I were “finally and reluctantly” leaving we stopped at the nearby shelter to view some video I had taken trying to capture the Chat. As we sat at the picnic table facing the water fountain (the fountain is often an attraction for birds) and as I was looking at my camera view screen, Don said, “There is the Swainson's!” Low and behold a Swainson's Thrush was in the low brush near the fountain only 20 feet away! This was a bonus as we had not seen it earlier when the “high road” duo of Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski spotted it. It gave both of us a treat as we enjoyed its presence for several minutes. Soon a Carolina Wren perched close by and sang. A lone White-throated Sparrow flew in and scratched in the leaves. Within a couple minutes a Great Crested Flycatcher flew into a Cedar Tree about 10 feet from us. An unexpected and enjoyable finale to the morning's walk.

PS: Not quite done as Greg Moyers returned in the afternoon and added Canada Warbler, Chipping Sparrow and Black-billed Cuckoo. This was a birding day that just kept on giving. And on that chirp and whistle we invite you to join us in June in Hillandale Park.

### Switzer Dam – *Greg Moyers*

Twelve RBC members attended the trip to Switzer Dam on May 3. At the top of the mountain we were greeted by Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, and Cerulean Warblers as well as American Redstarts and Scarlet Tanagers. Members watched a female American Redstart and a female Cerulean Warbler gathering nesting material from the roadside bank. A bit farther down the road, Clair Mellinger spotted a Baltimore Oriole and the group got up-close looks at a pair of Worm-eating Warblers. As we drove alongside the lake, we spotted Ruddy Ducks, a Common Loon, and a Pied-billed Grebe out on the water. We added Northern Parulas along this stretch. After crossing the bridge at the back of the lake, we walked back a short path leading to a small clearing. Here we added Acadian Flycatcher, a beautiful Magnolia Warbler, and a Common Yellowthroat. At the camp areas along the stream we added Swamp Sparrow and Ruby-throated Hummingbird and watched a female Blackburnian Warbler pulling nesting material from a tent caterpillar nest just off the path about 10 feet away. On our way out we added Hooded Warbler and a pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Other good birds included Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ovenbird, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireos, and Indigo Bunting. We finished with a total of 14 warblers (Pine and Louisiana Waterthrush were heard-only) and approximately 47 species.

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### **BIRD SIGHTINGS:**

Jonathan Todd reported **Scarlet Tanager, Black-and-white Warbler, and Worm-eating Warbler** at Hone Quarry on April 23 and a **Red-headed Woodpecker** at Paul State Forest on April 24.

While floating on the south fork of the Shenandoah River between Island Ford and Elkton on April 24, Lisa Hamilton and Linda Mathis found a **Common Merganser, Yellow-throated and Warbling Vireos, Ospreys, and Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers.**

William Leigh and others have reported an array of shorebirds at the pond on Oakwood Drive just off Rt. 11 near Mt. Crawford. William reported **Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted, and Solitary Sandpipers** on April 26, **Least Sandpipers** were present among 30 total shorebirds on April 27 and **Semipalmated Sandpipers** and a **Semipalmated Plover** joined the mix on April 30. Lesser Yellowlegs was the most numerous species over this period with more than 15 birds present for several days. William reported a **Dunlin** and a **Semipalmated Plover** on May 15.

Jonathan Todd reported a possible **Canvasback** at Nazarene Wetland on April 25. **Wilson's Snipe, Wood Ducks, Yellowlegs, and Blue-winged Teal** were also present.

Shaphan Shank reported **Blue-winged and Prothonotary Warblers**, among many others, at Union Springs on April 26. A **Yellow-throated Vireo, Indigo Buntings,** and a **Double-Crested Cormorant** joined several other migrants the following day. Shaphan found numerous migrants on May 6 including **Hermit Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Veery, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Yellow-billed Cuckoo,** and a host of warblers, including **Magnolia** and **Black-throated Blue.** Shaphan had a **Canada Warbler,** among many other migrants on May 15.

Kathy Fovargue had an **Indigo Bunting** at her feeder on April 26 and **Pine Siskins** on April 29. Mike Smith and Dave Wendelken have also reported **Pine Siskins** at their feeders. Dave reported around two dozen and still had some on May 7.

Jonathan Todd has found many good birds just past Riven Rock Park along Rt. 33 including **American Woodcock, Warbling Vireo,** and numerous warblers including **Hooded, Blackburnian, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, and Chestnut-sided.**

Birders including Penny Warren, Greg Moyers, Diane Lepkowski, and William Leigh have reported numerous warblers at Switzer Dam including **Magnolia, Cerulean, Blackburnian, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green, Worm-eating** and others.

Cook's Creek Arboretum in Bridgewater has been a productive spot for finding migrants over the last month. John Shea reported **Cape May, Yellow, Palm, and Black-throated Blue Warblers** as well as **Warbling Vireo** on April 28. On April 29, Greg Moyers reported a **Golden-winged Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Orchard Oriole,** and **Lincoln's Sparrow.** Diane Lepkowski reported a **Blackburnian Warbler** on the same date. Jonathan Todd had a **Worm-eating Warbler** on April 30. John Shea found **Wilson's and Blackpoll Warblers** on May 11. Greg Moyers had a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** the same day and reported a **Willow Flycatcher** on May 12. John Shea reported three **Willow Flycatchers** on May 23. Several more common warbler species have been reported at the arboretum as well.

The Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU has been another good spot for migrants. Jonathan Todd reported a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** on April 29. Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski reported a number of good birds on May 1 including at least two **Blue-winged Warblers, Worm-eating, Hooded, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, and Yellow Warblers, Swainson's Thrush, Veery,** and **Orchard** and **Baltimore Orioles.**

Mike Smith found 10 **Blackburnian Warblers** along with **Northern Parulas, Hooded,** and **Black-throated Green Warblers** at Hone Quarry on April 29. Mike reported **Red Crossbills** and **Red-breasted Nuthatch** at the usual spot at the top of Shenandoah Mtn the same day.

Diane Holsinger reported a **Black-billed Cuckoo** at her place in Timberville on April 30. Over the last month, Diane has also reported **Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireos, Baltimore Orioles, Wood Thrush, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Ovenbird, Rose-**

**breasted Grosbeak**, and **Indigo Buntings**. Diane heard a **Whip-poor-will** calling on May 1 and reported mating **Red-headed Woodpeckers** and a pair of **Magnolia Warblers** on May 23.

William Leigh found a **Blue-winged Warbler** and a **Least Flycatcher** at Paul State Forest on April 30. The following day, William reported **White-eyed Vireo** and **Black-billed Cuckoo** at the same location. John Shea added a **Nashville Warbler** later the same day.

Diane Lepkowski and Greg Moyers reported a pair of **Forster's Terns** at Lake Shenandoah on April 30. The following day, Greg and Diane found a **Bobolink** on Goods Mill Rd.

Vic Laubach and Gabriel Mapel had a big day on May 1. Highlights in the county included 32 **Lesser Yellowlegs** among other shorebirds at Nazarene Wetland, **Blue Grosbeak** and **Orchard Oriole** on Fulton School Rd, **Bobolink** on Clover Hill Rd and **Northern Harriers**, **Black-billed Cuckoo**, **Red-headed Woodpecker**, and a flyover group of what Vic suspects were **American White Pelicans** on Hopkins Gap Rd. At Slate Lick Fields, they added 21 **Broad-winged Hawks**, **Osprey**, **Red-shouldered Hawks**, **Cape May Warbler**, and **Yellow-throated Vireo**. They had 27 **Lesser Yellowlegs**, seven **Least Sandpipers**, and two **Ring-billed Gulls** on Fort Lynne Rd, and a **Grasshopper Sparrow** on Nicholson and Model Rds.

Bret Hart reports that a brood of ducklings was hatched at the Virginia Employment Commission in Harrisonburg. Bret also reported a **Hooded Warbler** among others at the Frazier Discovery Trail on Skyline Drive on May 1.

Numerous reports of good birds have come in from Hillandale Park. Jonathan Todd reported several warblers on May 3 including **Chestnut-sided**, **Yellow**, **Nashville**, **Worm-eating**, **Northern Parula** and others. Diane Lepkowski and Lisa Perry found **Black-throated Blue**, **Black-throated Green**, **Common Yellowthroat**, and **Magnolia** on May 10. John Shea added **Wilson's** and **Blue-winged Warblers** to the May 10 list. Jonathan Todd added **Prairie Warbler**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, and **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** on May 11 and **Bay-breasted** and **Cape May Warblers** on May 12. On May 13, the RBC walk turned up a **Yellow-breasted Chat**, **Blackpoll** and **Nashville Warblers**, and **Swainson's Thrush**. Later the same day Greg Moyers found a **Canada Warbler**. Late that afternoon, Greg and Diane Lepkowski found a **Black-billed Cuckoo**.

Mike Smith recorded 13 species of warblers at his place near Elkton and various stops along Skyline Drive on May 2. Highlights included **Black-throated Blue**, **Blackburnian**, **Canada**, **Cerulean**, **Pine**, and **Worm-eating Warblers** as well as **Least Flycatchers**.

Greg Moyers reported a **Sora** calling at the Nazarene Wetland on May 3. Bill Benish reported at least one bird calling on May 16 and Greg reported hearing three birds on May 19.

Diane Holsinger found **Bobolinks** on Moore's Mill Rd on May 5.

Elizabeth Ihle hosted a **Northern Bobwhite** at her place near Mt. Crawford in early May.

Greg Moyers and Barbara Andes reported **Common Nighthawks** calling from, and flying over the fields adjacent to the Broadway Community Park on May 7. Greg heard another nighthawk calling at Paul State Forest on May 12.

John Shea found a **Horned Grebe** at Lake Shenandoah and **Semipalmated Plover**, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, and **Least**, **Spotted**, and **Solitary Sandpipers** at Leonard's Pond on May 8. The following day, John found a **Blue Grosbeak** on Faughts Rd and **Magnolia Warbler**, **Veery**, **Double-crested Cormorants**, and **Common Loon** at Lake Shenandoah. Jonathan Todd reported a **Baltimore Oriole** and **Spotted Sandpiper** the same day.

Diane Holsinger reported **Ruddy Ducks, Common Loon,** and **Double-crested Cormorants** at Lake Shenandoah on May 14.

Ron Shearer found a pair of owlets (**Eastern Screech-Owl**) in the nest box at Cook's Creek Arboretum on May 14.

Diane Holsinger reported a **Peregrine Falcon** on Wenger's Mill Rd on May 15.

Jonathan Todd reported 15 **Purple Martins** occupying houses on Lewis Byrd and Liskey Rds on May 15.

Marshall Faintich reported a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Paul State Forest on May 16.

John Shea found two **Forster's Terns** at Silver Lake on May 17.

Greg Moyers reported several **Least** and **Semipalmated Sandpipers, Lesser Yellowlegs,** and **Spotted** and **Solitary Sandpipers** at Leonard's Pond on May 17.

Dave Wendelken had a **Mourning Warbler** at his place near Harrisonburg on May 18.

John Shea found several **Bank Swallows** at Lake Shenandoah on May 18. Shaphan Shank also reported this species at Silver Lake on the same day.

Ken Ranck reported a **Black-crowned Night Heron** at Silver Lake on May 19.

Matt Gingerich flushed an **American Bittern** and also reported a female **Hooded Merganser** with around 10 chicks at the RMH ponds on May 21. Later the same day, William Leigh heard a **Sora** calling at this location.

Diane Lepkowski reported a pair of **Black Terns** at Lake Shenandoah on May 22.



**Black Tern, one of Two at Lake Shenandoah (May 22)**

Photo: Dave Wendelken

**Birds of the ‘Burg: Season 2** - Guided bird walks for children and their families. 8:30-10:30 AM at Hillandale Park - First Saturday of each month April-October (*except July*). Meet at shelter #12 parking area. Walk the trails and learn about the surprising variety of birds right here in our city park. School-age children and their families are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them. All children (under 18) must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Led by Kathy Byers of the Rockingham Bird Club; sponsored by Sierra Club Shenandoah Group. For more information, contact Kathy Byers [\(540\) 820-6517](tel:5408206517) or Ralph Grove [\(540\) 478-3677](tel:5404783677)

## **RBC needs YOU!**

First, let me thank every member for your financial support. And let me inform all of you of opportunities to meet other members and keep our organization running smoothly:

1. VP-Programs (line up speakers/programs for our monthly meetings)
2. Create an updated brochure for our club (to hand out to prospective members & guests)
3. Join the committee to update the Birds of Rockingham County book (more than just an author; we need to determine the layout, outline, etc).
4. Bird Seed Sale Day - Kathy Byers will chair it, but needs help with creating the order form, processing the orders and (some) physical help with the delivery day

While there is no 'formal training' for volunteers, you WILL be mentored, so you won't have to go it alone. I know you're thinking:

1. The club doesn't need my help.
2. I have nothing of value to offer.
3. There are other people more qualified to serve.
4. Serving will require time or skills I don't possess.
5. I will be asked to serve in an area I don't enjoy.

But let me answer your concerns:

1. Of course we need your help. The question is where are your gifts and talents uniquely suited to the needs of the club?
2. You have tremendous value. The question is, "where can those gifts and talents can be utilized?"
3. Most people are already volunteering in another area. The club needs you and is fortunate to have you.
4. Yes, serving requires a donation of your time. Let's work together to discover what fits you best.
5. With so many opportunities available we can help you find the area best suited to your gifts.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me! 540-856-3058 or [Woodshar@aol.com](mailto:Woodshar@aol.com)

Debbie Harrison

## **22nd Annual Purple Martin Field Day**

Saturday, June 25, 2016

If you are interested in establishing or expanding a Purple Martin colony, attend this event. It starts at 11:00 A.M. at the farm of Merle and Lance Wood in Louisa County, Virginia (located between Richmond and Charlottesville).

Enjoy watching hundreds of these beautiful birds soaring and feeding their young while an expert tells you all about them. A nestbox trail tour to view bluebirds and Tree Swallows will begin at noon.

No registration is necessary. The event is free, but donations are appreciated to help cover expenses. Bring lawn chairs, binoculars, notepad, camera, and a picnic lunch to enjoy on the grounds. Drinks and snacks are provided.

For information and directions, visit the Purple Martin Field Day website, [www.purplemartinfieldday.org](http://www.purplemartinfieldday.org)

**Bluebird Nestbox Trail Monitors needed:** Are you interested in monitoring one of our bluebird trails? We need a few more volunteers to peek in boxes, count eggs and babies and help track our populations! Time is about an hour once per month (April - August). If you are interested, please contact Debbie Harrison, our County Coordinator for Bluebird Monitoring.



**Female Blackburnian Warbler gathering nest material  
(RBC Switzer Trip – a breeding record for the Atlas project!)**

Photo: Diane Lepkowski

## **VSO Annual meeting (April 29 – May 1, 2016)**

It was billed as: Spring birding in the mountains and valleys of Roanoke. A diverse assortment of habitats attract a wide variety of migrant and resident birds. From Yellow-crowned Night Herons and Louisiana Waterthrushes on our local streams to Cerulean Warblers on our mountain tops, from Grasshopper Sparrows in our fields to Ovenbirds in our forests—the Roanoke area has it all!

And it was! Even though the weather wasn't very cooperative (cool & rainy) there were many field trips to choose from (Friday afternoon, Saturday morning & Sunday morning). Each one was different and definitely a good reason to go to the annual meeting.

But, we did meet on Friday evening for a short business meeting, which was followed by Jerry Via, with his program entitled “Birds of the Roanoke Valley and Mountains” to familiarize us with what species we were likely to encounter. There were also vendors and a silent auction to visit.

Saturday afternoon was time to attend a series of short lectures at the Papers Session—so much science!

The banquet was Saturday evening, featuring Pete Dunne as keynote speaker. His talk was very enjoyable and he was available for a book signing and also for birding (if you won the raffle).

One more walk on Sunday morning, in the rain, closed out the weekend.

As with most field trips, I enjoy the people AND learn so much. I need lots of help identifying birds by sound, so having others identify them AND find them is great. At one point, I could see both an Orchard Oriole and a Baltimore Oriole in the same tree. A life bird for me was the Yellow-crowned Night Heron. There were several birds on a couple nests, so I got to see some ‘displaying’ too. We watched a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher make trips from a tent-caterpillar web (gathering nesting material) to a new nest under construction.

We also learned more about the 2<sup>nd</sup> VA Breeding Bird Atlas. It's important and I urge everyone's participation!

~ Debbie Harrison



**Female Hooded Merganser & family  
(Probably Rockingham County's first breeding record, reported by  
Matt Gingerich)**

Photo: Diane Lepkowski

Rockingham Bird Club  
151 Deerlick Lane  
Broadway, VA 22815



**PRESIDENT: Debbie Harrison**  
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Phone - 540-856-3058

**VICE PRESIDENT: PROGRAMS - VACANT**

**VICE PRESIDENT: FIELD TRIPS - Diane Lepkowski**

**SECRETARY: Donna Dobbs**

**TREASURER: Steve White - 540-833-6726**

**MEMBERS AT LARGE: Bill Benish & Lisa Perry**

**GOLDFINCH GAZETTE - Denise Hoodock**

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