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# Goldfinch Gazette

## The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<http://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLI

Number 7

March 2016

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### MARCH MEETING

**DATE:** Thursday, March 3, 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**

This month we welcome one of our own to the podium! Member Bill Faw will present “*Penguins of the Antarctic*” which will showcase his and Martha’s cruise to the Antarctic Peninsula and the Falkland Islands – served with blue ice, humpback whale; Weddell, elephant, and leopard seals; Black-browed Albatross, Cape Petrel, Striated Caracara, Kelp Gull, Polar Skua, Antarctic Cormorant, and live photos of 6 species of penguins. Bill and Martha have also seen penguins in New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa. At the end, Bill will show pictures of all 18-22 species of penguins, by genus and location.

Before the meeting, we will host Bill and Martha for dinner at Traditions, 625 Mt Clinton Pike in Harrisonburg at 5:30 PM. Please contact Denise Hoodock at 540-828-2595, 703-216-5499 or [dhooock@gmail.com](mailto:dhooock@gmail.com) if you’ll join us for dinner.

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#### **UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS - Diane Lepkowski**

**Lake Shenandoah with Greg Moyers, Saturday March 12** – We will meet in the parking lot at the Lake at 8:30AM. Please contact Greg at [gwmoyers@msn.com](mailto:gwmoyers@msn.com) or 434-3029 if you plan to attend. (This is a VDGIF fee area – Virginia fishing, hunting, boating license or access pass required.)

**Hillandale Park, Tuesday, March 15 with Tom Mizell** – Meet at the Children's playground parking lot at 8:00 AM for our last Hillandale walk of winter. According to the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Calendar that's the date that Doves begin nesting. *The February walk was rescheduled, and will be held 8:00 AM, Monday February 29.*

**American Woodcock Trip, T.B.A.** – We will watch the forecast and aim for an evening visit to Karen, Everett & Annie Shank’s farm, where the birds have begun displaying, or to Slate Lick Fields.

If you're interested in more information, contact Diane Lepkowski at [dianelep1@yahoo.com](mailto:dianelep1@yahoo.com) or 432-1047.

**SAVE THE DATE: Madison Run Fire Road (Shenandoah National Park) with Greg Moyers**  
**Saturday April 9** – *Details will be announced in next month's newsletter.*

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## TRIP REPORTS

### **2016 Rockingham County Raptor & Waterfowl Count** – *Tom Lord*

The 2016 Raptor & Waterfowl Count was held on Saturday February 13. The county was divided into 6 areas and 14 people conducted the count. A total of 562 miles were driven using 6 cars and involved 32 hours of time. A total of 36 species were seen. The results were better than expected since many of the small ponds were frozen in the 14 to 22 F temperatures. A new species was seen by John Shea - White-fronted Goose (2). Other record numbers observed include: Lesser Scaup (8), Ring-necked Duck (46), Hooded Merganser (20), Pied-billed Grebe (9), Ring-billed Gull (31), Common Merganser (31), and Raven (9). The records were tied for the Trumpeter Swan (1) and Ross Goose (1). This was the 16<sup>th</sup> count conducted since the beginning in 1998 and turned out to be very successful.

### **Highland County** – *Mike Shank*

On Feb. 6, three RBC members traveled to Highland County to look for Golden Eagles. John Spahr joined them for part of the trip. They counted 36 species, seen or heard. Highlights included a Wilson's Snipe, a Red-shouldered Hawk, 4 Bald Eagles, and 4 Golden Eagles. Full list: Canada Goose, Mallard, Hooded Merganser, Golden Eagle, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Wilson's Snipe, Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon), Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker (heard only), Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Pileated Woodpecker (heard only), Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Eastern Meadowlark, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

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## BIRD SIGHTINGS:

Mike Smith had a **Hermit Thrush** in his yard near Elkton on Jan 24 and 13 **Pine Siskins** at his feeder on Jan 29 and 19 on Feb 5.

Don Perkuchin saw 11 **Savannah Sparrows**, **Horned Larks**, and an **American Pipit** on Old Bridgewater Rd in Mt. Crawford on Jan. 27.

Mike Smith reported a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** in his yard on Jan 31. Mike also had 2 **Brown Creepers** at his suet feeder on Feb 5. On Feb 10, Mike had a first of winter male **Purple Finch** at his feeder.

A **Snow Goose** was seen at Silver Lake on Feb. 1-2.

Matt Gingerich reported a **Snow Goose** along Linville Creek near Williamsburg Rd on Feb. 4. Matt also found a **Ross's Goose** and a **Snow Goose** at Lake Terrace in Harrisonburg on Feb. 13.



**Ross's Goose (left) and Snow Goose at Lake Terrace**

*Photo: Diane Lepkowski*

Diane Lepkowski had a **Brown Thrasher** in her yard outside of Harrisonburg on Feb. 12.

John Shea found two **Greater White-Fronted Geese** at the Merck swamp south of Elkton on Feb. 13. John also found several **Common Mergansers** on the river at Captain Yancey Rd on the same date.

Diane Lepkowski and Greg Moyers reported **31 Ring-Billed Gulls** at Lake Shenandoah and a **Common Goldeneye** at Silver Lake on Feb. 13.

John Todd reported **Green-winged Teal** and the continuing **Trumpeter Swan** at Silver Lake on Feb. 14. Herb Myers added **Redheads** and **Lesser Scaup** on the same date.

John Shea found a **Golden Eagle** at Slate Lick Fields on Feb. 14.

Don Perkuchin has hosted a **Dickcissel** at his place in Bridgewater since Feb. 15.

Karen, Everett & Annie Shank report **American Woodcocks** began displaying at their place on Feb 21. That night, Everett saw one backlit by the full moon!

**BIRD CLUB BOOK CLUB - Maureen Gallagher-McLeod**

The B.C.B.C. will meet at 6:30 PM on Thursday, March 17, 2016, at the home of Elizabeth Ihle for a carry-in dinner and to discuss the book “Timothy; or Notes of an Abject Reptile” by Verlyn Klinkenborg. Anyone interested in joining a book discussion may contact Maureen Gallagher-McLeod at [famcleod@earthlink.net](mailto:famcleod@earthlink.net) or 896-9541.

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**Common Goldeneye (female) at Silver Lake**

*Photo: Diane Lepkowski*

## ***A NOTE FROM JILL AND LANCE MORROW***

In 2016 the Morrrows will be initiating color banding kestrels in association with The Shenandoah Valley Raptor Study Area (SVRSA). The SVRSA is centered on Timberville and covers Northern Rockingham and Southern Shenandoah Counties. The northern boundary runs east-west through Forestville and the southern boundary east-west through Lacey Spring. We are investigating the movements of kestrels to and from the SVRSA and color bands should be very visible through binoculars or spotting scopes.

All kestrels banded within the SVRSA will be marked with a yellow band on the kestrel's left leg with a silver colored USGS band on the right leg. All kestrels we capture either north or south of the SVRSA will be marked with an orange band on the kestrel's left leg with a silver colored USGS band on the right leg. If anyone sees a kestrel with a color band they can report it to us at [lance@landjmorrow.com](mailto:lance@landjmorrow.com) or call Lance or Jill Morrow at 540-896-6553. Please note the color of the band, location (nearest intersection or house address), time and date of your observation. Also, we are interested in any sightings of clusters of kestrels (banded or unbanded) during the winter months.

Last year within the SVRSA we banded over 250 kestrels. This season, with the generous nest box donations from the Rockingham Bird Club, we are hoping to increase that to over 300 kestrels. The majority will be young produced within the kestrel nest boxes.

Starting in mid-April we will start catching kestrels on eggs in the nest boxes. Anyone interested in tagging along should contact us. One or two people can ride with us, larger groups will need to drive their own vehicles but we can only deal with two vehicles at a time. Walking distances will be about 20' on average but can be up to 100 yards to the nest box. People with limited mobility can stay in the vehicle and we would be more than happy to bring the kestrels to them. Once again we would like to thank the Rockingham Bird Club for the nest box donations, especially those who took the time to build the boxes!

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**GOLDFINCH GAZETTE - Denise Hoodock**

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