



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<http://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLIV

Number 9

May 2019

MAY MEETING

DATE: Thursday, May 2, 2019

TIME: 7:00 PM

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

PROGRAM: Report from Vieques: Hurricane Maria's Impact on the Birds of Puerto Rico

Daphne Gemmill, also known as the “Bird Lady of Vieques”, has studied the birds of Vieques Island, Puerto Rico for over 35 years. Returning to the island after hurricane Maria, Daphne will report on her observations of the impacts of Maria in 2017 as well as future challenges associated with climate change on both Vieques and other Caribbean Islands’ birdlife.

Join us for dinner before the meeting: 5:30 PM at ORIENTAL CAFÉ, 563 University Blvd #110 (across from Costco) in Harrisonburg. Please contact Robyn Puffenbarger, 540-908-7335 or by email rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu, in advance, if you plan to attend.

MAY FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski*

Members and guests welcome. Minors (under 18) must be accompanied by a parent or adult.

Hillendale Monthly Walk, Monday, May 6, with Tom Mizell: Meet at the Children's Playground Parking Lot at 8 AM.

Switzer Dam, Wednesday, May 8, with Greg Moyers: This trip includes stops along the forest service road to, and beyond, Switzer Dam and some walking on uneven trails for those who are able. We should find LOTS of warblers including Northern Parula; Blackburnian and Black-throated Green Warblers; along with other migrants and mountain breeders. Meet at the Food Maxx (former Food Lion) parking lot on Rt. 33 west (West Market Street) at 8:15AM. Bring a snack and water if you'd like. There are no restroom facilities. We expect to return by 1:30 PM. **Please contact Greg at gwmoyers@msn.com or 434-3029 if you plan to attend.**

Shenandoah National Park (Pocosin & South River), Saturday May 11, with Diane Lepkowski:

Target species include the high-altitude breeding Cerulean Warbler -- a species in decline. Others may include: Veery, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, vireos (Blue-headed, Red-eyed and Yellow-throated); Hooded, Canada, Black-and-white Warblers; and Ovenbird. Carpooling will be important, as parking is limited. National Park annual pass or per-car fee applies. (Usually we have enough attendees with passes; if not, a fee may apply.) The trip includes walking about 1 mile in all at Pocosin

and that or a bit more at South River, with mild uphill climbs and some uneven trails. We will aim to wind up at South River Picnic area for a picnic lunch and return to Harrisonburg by around 1:30 PM. Bring water, snacks, lunch, and raingear just in case! Restrooms are available at South River. **Please contact Diane to sign up in advance** – dianelep1@yahoo.com or 540-432-1047. Meet at Kohl's Harrisonburg parking lot on Rt. 33 (E. Market Street) at 7:30 AM.

Long Run Road, GW National Forest (Little North Mountain), Wednesday, May 15, with Bill

Benish: From a Rockingham birding hotspots map: "Long Run Road is known for its springtime breeding warblers. The road provides access to a variety of elevations, increasing the possible numbers of breeding warblers." Targets include Black-throated Green, Worm-eating, Hooded, and Black-and-white Warblers. We'll focus mostly on the approximate five-mile drive ascent while listening the entire way and taking advantage of viewing at many stops whenever we wish.

Meet at the Food Maxx (former Food Lion) parking lot on Rt. 33 west (West Market Street) by 7:30 AM. The trip may take 4-5 hours and does not include public restrooms. Bring water and some lunch/snack food. We can carpool based on participants' time needs and preferences. **Please contact Bill Benish by email** wcbenish@gmail.com or phone 540-908-7336 if you plan to attend.

TRIP REPORTS

Hillandale Monthly Walk – *Tom Mizell*

Bright yellow daffodils were in near full bloom and Redbud trees added their rich red color to the backdrop in Hillandale Park on a beautiful morning. The temperature was 47 degrees at 8:00 AM on 11 April 2019 as 17 members of the Rockingham Bird Club were welcomed by the inviting call of Carolina Wrens. More song followed as the melodic notes of Brown Thrashers greeted the group as we crossed the Cabin Bridge. Our target birds included "Warblers/general, Cerulean Warbler/specific, Pileated Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, and Brown Thrasher. We almost heard the Brown Thrasher before we wrote it down on the wish list!

Initial sightings also included American Robins, Blue Jays, Mourning Doves, Northern Flickers, and Mallards. Along the trail behind the cabin we found White-throated Sparrows, Eastern Towhee, White-breasted Nuthatches and Turkey Vultures giving us 13 species as we neared the Northwest Corner Bridge. Along this section of the gravel trail we also enjoyed watching Northern Cardinals and Blue Jays feeding young.

We added European Starling, Pileated Woodpecker, and American and Fish Crow. Our walking pace slowed to a stop in the NW Corner as we observed a Downy Woodpecker making repeated dives at a Red-bellied Woodpecker that was working on a hole in a tall snag. After these aerial acrobatics Greg spotted a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Soon we added Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets and Eastern Phoebe in this active corner. It was 9:10 as we crossed the second bridge with a list of 20 species.

Our pace quickened and we added Carolina Chickadee, Chimney Swift and House Sparrow as we moved on to the Log Cabin Bridge a second time and crossed it again around 9:50 AM. It seems that NW Corner Bridge is a jumping off point as many birders call it a day and depart for other activities. Only 5 of the original 17 birders remained.

Walking the Southwest loop, we added Northern Mockingbird in its usual haunts, House Sparrow, Hermit Thrush and Brown-headed Cowbird. We thought Song Sparrow was our last addition bringing our total for the morning to 29 species by 10:30 AM. Not so fast, we added a Tufted Titmouse as Greg Moyers saw one on his way out of the park and phoned in his observation. It was a very pleasant spring morning. Thanks to all that helped us enjoy the sights and sounds of spring at Hillandale. Hope to see you next month. May we have warblers in May!

Madison Run Fire Road, Shenandoah National Park – *Greg Moyers*

Five members of the RBC attended various segments of the walk at Madison Run Fire Rd on April 6. The weather was ideal as we gathered at the parking area. We soon heard the song of one of our target birds – Louisiana Waterthrush. After a moment of trying to figure out where the song was coming from, Jocelyn Chan spotted the bird across the stream. We got a brief and partially obstructed view of the bird at this spot. Further up the road we were afforded a much better and prolonged view of another singing waterthrush. Other early highlights were an Eastern Phoebe and a Brown Creeper. Along our hike up the road we spotted Pine Warblers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. We heard the song of Blue-headed Vireos, but these birds remained unseen on this day. On our way back down the road we got looks at Red-breasted Nuthatches and a brief glimpse of a Winter Wren below us at the stream's edge. We totaled 23 species for the trip.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Diane Holsinger reported an **Osprey** at Silver Lake on March 26.

Kat Cummings had two **Pine Warblers** and two **Pine Siskins** visit her feeders in Basye on March 26.

Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski reported **Louisiana Waterthrushes, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Blue-headed Vireos** at Madison Run Fire Rd on March 30.

Don Perkuchin reported four **Long-tailed Ducks**, nine **Horned Grebes**, two **American Wigeons**, a **Greater Scaup**, and a flyby flock of 10 unidentified gulls/terns at Silver Lake on April 5. Also, on April 5, Allen Larner reported two **Long-tailed Ducks** and three **Buffleheads** at Lake Shenandoah.

An **American Bittern** spent the day at a swampy pond on private property off Honey Run Rd on April 6.

William Leigh reported two **Long-tailed Ducks** at Silver Lake on April 6. These two females appeared to be different individuals than the ones present the previous day. One of these birds continued through at least April 15.

Leonard's Pond hosted **Wilson's Snipe, Greater Yellowlegs, Hooded Mergansers, Blue-winged Teal, Solitary Sandpiper, and Bank Swallows** in mid-April.

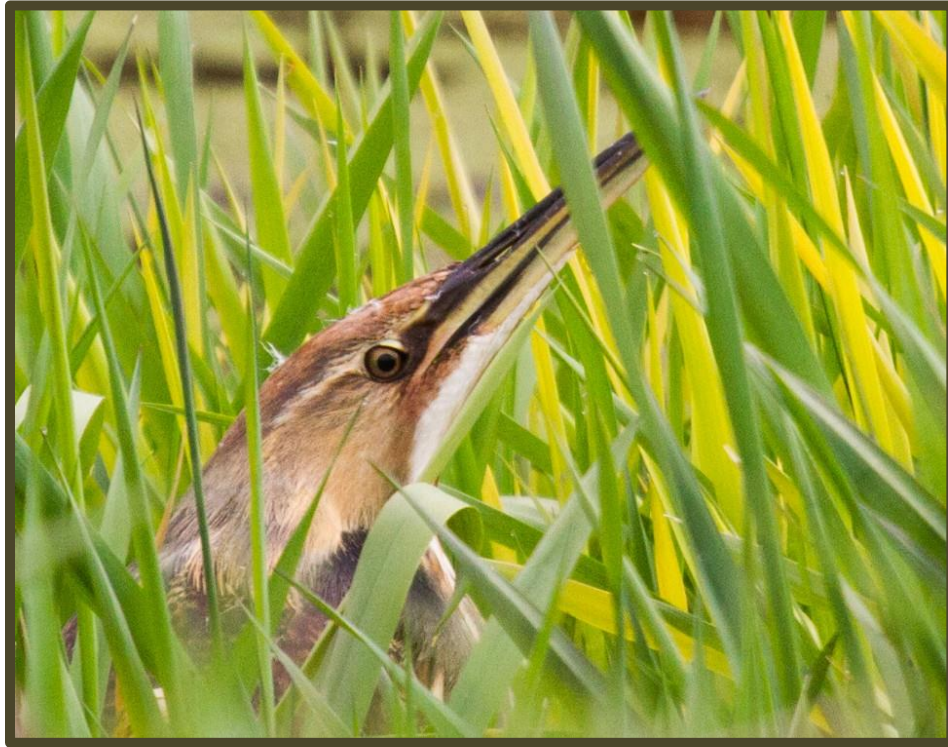
Shaphan Shank reported the first **Whip-Poor-Will** of the year at Union Springs on April 9 and the first **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** and **Ovenbird** on April 14.

Diane Lepkowski and Greg Moyers reported a **Black-and-white Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and a pair of Barred Owls** calling at Madison Run Fire Rd on April 13.

Bob Eggleston reported **Swamp Sparrows** and a **White-eyed Vireo** at Hillandale Park on April 13.

Tom Mizell reported two **Ospreys** and a **Great Egret** at Silver Lake on April 15.

Greg Moyers reported **Black-throated Green, Black-and-white, Pine, and Black-throated Blue Warblers**, as well as **Louisiana Waterthrush** and **Red-breasted Nuthatch** at Switzer Dam on April 16. At the same location on April 20, Greg found his first-of-year **Blackburnian Warblers** and **Northern Parula**. He added **American Redstart** and **Hooded Warbler** at a trail along Rt. 33 at the base of the mountain on the same date.



American Bittern

Photo credit: Diane Lepkowski

Bill Benish and Randy Cline reported two **Broad-winged Hawks, Black-throated Green, Black-and-white, and Pine Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, Blue-headed Vireos, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Wild Turkeys** at Long Run Rd on April 16.

Greg Moyers reported a **Sora** calling at the Nazarene Church Rd Wetland and a **Ruffed Grouse** on Union Springs Rd on April 17.

Shaphan Shank reported his first **Chuck-Will's-Widow** and first **Wood Thrush** of the year at Union Springs on April 18.

William Leigh reported a **Yellowlegs** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond on April 18.

Greg Moyers reported a **Common Yellowthroat** at Hillandale Park on April 19. Greg and William Leigh also got a **Broad-winged Hawk** and several **Purple Finches** at the park later the same day.

Diane Lepkowski reported a **Worm-eating Warbler** at Madison Run Fire Rd on April 20.

Kevin Shank reports that the **Evening Grosbeaks** continue at his place at Union Springs and were joined by a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** on April 20.

William Leigh reported a **Palm Warbler** and **Purple Finches** at Paul State Forest on April 21.

Diane Lepkowski reported a **Warbling Vireo** at Lake Shenandoah on April 21, and later found three there, together, on April 24. On April 22, Diane reported a **Northern Waterthrush** at Hillandale Park.

Greg Moyers reported at least three **Prairie Warblers** along Cub Run Rd on April 23. Greg also had a **Bobolink** on Goods Mill Rd on the same date.

Bob Eggleston reported **Black-crowned Night-herons** at the usual spot near the poultry plant on Rt. 42 in Dayton on April 23.



Vesper Sparrow

Photo credit: Greg Moyers

ANNOUNCEMENTS

25th Annual Purple Martin Field Day in VA

Date: Saturday, June 22, 2019

Time: 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Location: Central Virginia (Louisa County) (40 miles west of Richmond)

Cost: Free, but donations are welcome

Questions? Call Kathy at (434) 222-1831 (You must leave a voicemail)

This year, we are scheduling a full program! Plan to arrive before **11:00 AM** so you won't miss the Door Prize give-away (including free GOURDS!) and the beginning of the presentations.

Lance Wood and several other speakers will teach you how to *get* martins, get *more* martins, and manage them properly so you won't *lose* them. Which martin housing is the safest? —gourds or houses? Do Virginia martins like gourds or houses better? COME AND FIND OUT!!!

You will learn how to protect martins from snakes, hawks, owls, raccoons, House Sparrows, Starlings, wind damage, and lightning, as well as how to grow gourds and turn them into martin homes. You'll receive free equipment catalogs and literature about martin attraction and management. Bring a bag lunch to eat while you listen to the presentations and watch the martins feeding their nestlings! Then visit with other martin-lovers! —including landlords who post on the PMCA Forum and Facebook page! FREE, but donations are appreciated to cover expenses.

See www.purplemartinfieldday.org for directions, photos, and to find out what to bring (and NOT to bring!)

Come join the fun in central Virginia!

Questions? Call Kathy at (434) 222-1831 (You must leave a voicemail; I'll call you back!)

Rockingham Bird Club Executive Committee

Nominations are now in order. Please contact President Debbie or any current Officer.

Please indicate your willingness to serve as:

One-year terms:

President

VP – Programs

VP – Field trips

Secretary

Treasurer

Two-year terms (with 1 successive term allowed):

2 Members-at-Large

(Our current Members-at-Large are: Tom Lord, thru June 2019 & eligible to serve again, and Katherine Cummings, thru June 2020)



Springtime at the Hillandale Cabin

Photo credit: Tom Mizell



NEW MEMBERS

Diane Ahuna

Susan Beachy

Saloma & David Furlong

Rockingham Bird Club
151 Deer Lick Lane
Broadway, VA 22815



PRESIDENT: Debbie Harrison
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VICE PRESIDENT: PROGRAMS - Robyn Puffenbarger

VICE PRESIDENT: FIELD TRIPS - Diane Lepkowski

SECRETARY: Anne Nielsen

TREASURER: Audrey Shenk

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Katherine Cummings & Tom Lord

GOLDFINCH GAZETTE - Denise Hoodock

EMAIL: info@rockinghambirdclub.com



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