



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<http://rockinghambirdclub.com>

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October 2018

OCTOBER MEETING

DATE: Thursday, October 4, 2018

TIME: 7:00 PM

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

PROGRAM: *Birds of Australia and New Zealand by Dr. Marshall Faintich*

It's really an adventure to go birding in a location where almost every bird you see is another life bird, and a North American winter trip to the southern hemisphere turns into a summer adventure. Marshall went on a 23-day tour there in January 2011, and although it was a general tourism activity, he saw 88 avian species in Australia and 41 in New Zealand. From the urban parks to the desert outback to the rugged mountains and coastal waters, this was an experience of a lifetime. Marshall is the author of "A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Wintergreen." His wildlife photos have appeared in newspapers, magazines, websites, government reports and presentations.

Join us for dinner with Marshall before the meeting: 5:30 PM at Lola Mo's Deli, 122 S Main St Ste 103, Harrisonburg, VA 22801. Please contact Robyn Puffenbarger, 540-908-7335 or puffenb@bridgewater.edu, in advance if you plan to attend.

OCTOBER FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski*

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

Paul State Forest, Monday, October 8 with Bill Benish: Meet at Paul State Forest parking lot at 8:00 AM on Rt 613 just north of Rt, 257. Directions: From Dayton, follow SR 257 west 6.3 miles to Rt. 613. Turn right and proceed 0.2 miles to the state forest parking area on the right. Please contact Bill if you plan to attend or have questions: wcbenish@gmail.com or 540.908.7336. More info on the forest at: <https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/vbwt/sites/paul-state-forest/>

Hillandale Monthly Walk, Thursday, October 11 with Tom Mizell: Meet at the Children's Playground Parking lot at 8:00 AM. The Virginia Wildlife Calendar shows Barn Swallows meandering south on 10 October. Let's meander at Hillandale and see if we can find some stragglers as well as enjoy the Fall Color.

Lake Shenandoah, Saturday, October 27 with Greg Moyers: We will meet in the parking lot at the lake at 8:30 AM. Please contact Greg at gwmoyers@msn.com or 434-3029 if you plan to attend. The lake is a DGIF fee access area which requires a fishing/hunting license or access permit. For more information regarding fees go to <https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/>

REMINDER: Bird Seed Sale 2018

Bird Seed Orders are due to Kathy Byers on Friday, October 5, 2018. Pick-Up Day is Friday, November 9, 2018 at BFG Supply 2:00-6:00pm. For more info contact Kathy at 540-820-6517 or kkbyers77@gmail.com

Bird Club Book Club (BCBC) - The BCBC will be meeting on the fourth Thursdays of the month at members' houses for a delicious shared carry-in meal and a discussion of a nature-related book. In October the group will be reading the long-awaited *Birding without Borders* by the American birder Noah Stryker. The BCBC is small and has a lot of fun and good discussion. It welcomes new people. For more information, please call Elizabeth Ihle at 421-5257 or Martha Faw at 383-7660.

TRIP REPORTS

Union Springs, June 2018 – Greg Moyers

Eleven attendees enjoyed a beautiful evening at Union Springs on June 14. We gathered at the dam area and proceeded back to the shale pit, making a few stops along the way to watch a Pine Warbler and a pair of Scarlet Tanagers. At the shale pit we heard Ovenbird, Worm-eating Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, and Eastern Wood-Pewee. At 8:30 PM our first Eastern Whip-Poor-Will of the evening began calling in the distance. We soon heard a second bird just a bit closer. Our luck improved as we proceeded back toward the dam. At one point we had a pair of Whips sitting at the edge of the road while more birds could be heard calling and seen flying across the road. Diane Lepkowski was buzzed by one Whip as it flew past. We made a stop at Kevin Shank's place to try for the Chuck-Will's-Widow on our way out. We added another Whip or two at Kevin's but no luck with the Chuck on this evening. We estimated somewhere between 10-15 Whip-Poor-Will's seen and heard on the night.

Switzer Dam – Greg Moyers

Ten members of the RBC made the trek to the Switzer Dam area on Sept. 20. The weather was beautiful, and we had a few good birds on our way down the mountain but, for the most part, the migrant warblers eluded us. At one of our first stops, we heard a Yellow-throated Vireo singing as we exited the vehicles. We soon found several other birds, including a Black-throated Green Warbler, Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. As we were preparing to move along, a mature Bald Eagle came soaring slowly by, affording nice looks for all. We then found a Cape May Warbler foraging in the pines and a few of us got brief looks at a Red-breasted Nuthatch which was tooting away just ahead of us. Bird activity was minimal on the stretch of road adjacent to the lake. Bill Benish spotted an American Redstart, we got good looks at a Red-tailed Hawk, heard a Blue-headed Vireo, and a few of us got a brief look at a Swainson's Thrush. Unfortunately, the rains earlier in the week were ample to send the stream flowing rapidly over the bridge at the back of the lake. We decided to cut the trip a bit short rather than trying to cross the stream. On the way out, Diane Lepkowski spotted four Broad-winged Hawks soaring overhead. We finished the trip with approximately 30 species.

Hillandale Monthly Walks – *Tom Mizell*

On Tuesday September 11, 2018, after the debut of Hurricane Florence and with a threat of rain, 4 members of the Rockingham Bird Club ventured to Hillandale Park for our last walk of Summer. It was foggy and 66 degrees as we met in the parking lot. Wish list birds included Mississippi Kite and warblers.

The morning fog was broken by the call of the Great Crested Flycatcher, and accompaniment from Carolina Wren, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, Fish Crow and American Goldfinch. As we crossed the bridge near the log cabin we added Mourning Dove and Northern Cardinal; and some House Finches fed on cedar berries. Also, in the cedars, we found American Redstart and a few Gray Catbirds that followed us for much of the walk. Yellow-billed Cuckoos flew in from the southwest as Chimney Swifts sped overhead. The Cuckoos along with Red-bellied Woodpecker, and White-breasted Nuthatches put our list at 15 species by 8:17 AM.

We reached the fork in the gravel trail behind the cabin and then turned around to take in more birds in the walnut trees around the cabin as well as the brush just south of the cabin. A host of birds were feeding on the poison ivy berries in the canopy. Eastern Towhee, Least Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Brown Thrasher, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee joined the Cuckoos and Great Crested Flycatcher enjoying a feast. Moving back towards the bridge at least 3 Baltimore Orioles were in the top of the walnut trees along with Downy Woodpecker. The males were quite colorful on this foggy morning. In the brush and small trees south of the cabin Greg Moyers spotted a Common Yellowthroat. Before leaving this area, we added Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and American Robin. As we walked along the golf course boundary at least 4 Yellow-billed Cuckoos demonstrated their sweeping curves as they flew about from one side of the trail to the other.

On the way to the northwest corner we added Chestnut-sided and Black-and-white Warblers. By 9:30 AM we crossed the Northwest Pedestrian Bridge and our list had grown to 30 species. The stream channel was quite full due to Hurricane Florence remnants and the abundant rains of summer.

We soon added Carolina Chickadee and Common Raven as we began to head back towards the cabin and by 10:15 AM we crossed the cabin bridge a second time. A light mist fell on and off during the walk. American Crow, Turkey Vulture, Northern Parula and Magnolia Warblers rounded out our list at 37 species. It was still cloudy and 69 degrees as we concluded at 11:08. It is noted that cabin area was by far the most active area and it may be a good location to do some serious lawn chair birding during fall migration. Thanks to all for showing up in the fog and threat of rain on 11 September. I think we all stayed relatively dry for the most part and it was a comfortable walk. Hope to see you in October for our first Fall walk at Hillandale.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Huck Hutchens reported 15 **Common Nighthawks** and a **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Leonard's Pond on Aug. 26. Herb Myers reported that his son-in-law estimated 70 **Common Nighthawks** at Happy Valley Rd in Keezletown on Aug. 31.

William Leigh found a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at the produce auction fields on Lumber Mill Rd on Sept. 2. In the following days, as many as three **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were reported at this location.

Mike Smith reported a **Black Tern** at Leonard's Pond on Sept. 2. Greg Moyers reported a **Black Tern** at the same location on Sept. 18.

Huck Hutchens reported a **Stilt Sandpiper**, along with **Least** and **Pectoral Sandpipers** and **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Leonard's Pond on Sept. 8. Huck saw the **Stilt Sandpiper** at this location again on Sept. 13.

On Sept. 9 William Leigh reported several great finds at the sod farm on Captain Yancey Rd near Elkton. Highlights included several **Sanderlings**, **Stilt Sandpiper**, **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**, **Semipalmated** and **Least Sandpipers**, **Pectoral Sandpipers**, **Semipalmated Plover**, **Peregrine Falcon**, and possible **Baird's Sandpipers**. Later the same day, James Fox confirmed the **Baird's Sandpiper** and Diane Lepkowski found a **Red-necked Phalarope** at the same location. On Sept. 11, several birders reported a **Wilson's Phalarope**, **American Golden-Plovers**, and as many as 19 **White-rumped Sandpipers** at this spot.

Shaphan Shank reported **Common Nighthawks** and a **Merlin** at Union Springs on Sept. 10.

A **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Black-bellied Plovers**, and **American Golden-Plover** were reported to eBird at the produce auction on Lumber Mill Rd Sept. 10-11. The turnstone and golden-plovers were reported sporadically at this location over the next week.

Mike Smith reported approximately 150 **Chimney Swifts** entering the chimney at Elkton Elementary School on Sept. 11.

William Leigh reported four **White-rumped Sandpipers** at the intersection of Lumber Mill and W. Dry River Rds on Sept. 12. On the same date, Greg Moyers reported a **Peregrine Falcon** and a **Red-headed Woodpecker** on separate power poles along W. Dry River Rd.

Matt Gingerich has been watching for hawks in September and reported two **Peregrine Falcons**, a **Bald Eagle**, and a pair of **Broad-winged Hawks** in Harrisonburg on Sept. 13. On Sept. 18 Matt counted 1,120 **Broad-wingeds** as well as a **Merlin** and a **Bald Eagle** flying over his place at Linville.

Anne Nielsen reported 3 **Bald Eagles** near her home and Willow Run Road.

Diane Holsinger had a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** visit her feeder in Timberville on Sept. 16. On Sept. 20, Diane hosted five **Magnolia Warblers**, a **Black-and-white Warbler**, and a **Wood Thrush**.

Allen Larner reported five **Northern Shovelers** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond on Sept. 16.

Huck Hutchens reported a **Caspian Tern** at Lake Shenandoah on Sept. 16.

Donna Dobbs had approximately 600 **Broad-winged Hawks** fly over her place in Penn Laird on Sept. 18.

Matt Gingerich and Clair Mellinger had numerous warblers, including **Cape May** and **Black-throated Blue**, and 20 plus **Red Crossbills** on Shenandoah Mtn on Sept. 19. Just over the Augusta Co. border at Reddish Knob, Clair and Matt had a **Golden Eagle** soar by.

Greg Moyers reported several good birds at Hillandale Park on the afternoon of Sept. 20 including **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**, **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, **Baltimore Oriole**, empid flycatchers, and 13 warblers – **Cape May**, **Magnolia**, **Tennessee**, **American Redstart**, **Black-throated Green**, **Palm**, **Hooded**, **Common Yellowthroat**, **Northern Parula**, **Chestnut-sided**, **Blackpoll**, **Blackburnian**, and a probable **Wilson's**.

William Leigh found a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** at Switzer Dam on Sept. 15 and a **Summer Tanager** at the same location on Sept. 16.

Diane Lepkowski reported a **Great Horned Owl** calling in her yard on Sept 21.

William Leigh reported four **American Golden-Plovers, Ruddy Turnstone, and Pectoral Sandpipers** at the intersection of Honey Run and Koogler Rds on Sept. 22.

Greg Moyers reported a **Warbling Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Scarlet Tanagers, Swainson's Thrush, Least Flycatcher**, and 16 warbler species, including **Prairie, Canada, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Nashville, Tennessee, Magnolia, Cape May**, and others at Hillendale Park on Sept. 23.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership Dues

The membership rates continue at \$15 for individual membership and \$20 for family membership. Membership gets you our monthly newsletter, *Goldfinch Gazette*, by email or U.S. mail, your choice.

Please pay your dues promptly, either at the club's Thursday meetings or by sending your checks, made out to "RBC," to:

Audrey Shenk, RBC Treasurer
949 Northfield Ct.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Invitation from Central Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association President, Keala Timko:

Our symposium, "Going Native," will be October 27, 2018 from 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM at Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, VA. Doug Tallamy will be giving two presentations, with Ian Caton of Wood Thrush Native Plant Nursery and Jim Hurley of Blue Ridge Prism rounding out the event. The symposium promises to provide a fun and informative focus on the important role native plants have in our landscapes, dealing with invasive species, and maximizing the use of native plants. The cost is only \$65! Seating is limited, so register early! Find more information and the registration form on the web site: <https://csvgma.org/>

NAME TAGS – Remember to please find your name tag on the back table and wear for the duration of the meeting. Please return it after the meeting. Thanks!



New Members

Melinda Chitwood, Norman & Carol Clark, Rachel Markley, John Mast, John and Mary Noffsinger, Diane Ritchie, Meredith Roof, Judith Wright and Mark Tanis.

Rockingham Bird Club
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VICE PRESIDENT: PROGRAMS - Robyn Puffenbarger

VICE PRESIDENT: FIELD TRIPS - Diane Lepkowski

SECRETARY: Anne Nielson

TREASURER: Audrey Shenk

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Katherine Cummings & Tom Lord

GOLDFINCH GAZETTE - Denise Hoodock

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