



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLV

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October 2019

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Important! To keep your membership in good standing, renew before November 1: RBC membership year begins each September. Dues are payable annually in September and are not pro-rated. In keeping with RBC bylaws, members who have not paid dues by November 1st, 2019 will be dropped from the Club roster and mailing lists.

Dues - note new rates:

Individual: \$20

Family: \$30

Student: \$10

*Dues can be paid by mail, at meetings, OR electronically on the new RBC website:

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com/join-or-renew/>

OCTOBER MEETING

DATE: Thursday, October 3, 2019

TIME: 7:00 PM

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

PROGRAM: "Winging it: Bird Journalism in Brazil" by Andrew Jenner.

In the August 2019 issue of the American Birding Association "Birding," you will find an article on birds and the glass wall in Sao Paulo, Brazil by our local journalist, Andrew Jenner. Andrew attended Eastern Mennonite University and took ornithology with Dr. Clair Mellinger. He spent most of his journalism career in the Shenandoah Valley, and worked as a freelancer for a decade. Andrew has covered many topics in a range of publications, including: The Atlantic, The Washington Post, Discover and Roads & Kingdoms. He has also been a regular contributor to WMRA public radio. From 2015-18, he lived and reported in southern Brazil.

Join us for dinner with Andrew before the meeting: 5:30 PM at Xenia, 1751-A Virginia Ave in the Harmony Square Shopping Center located just north of VMRC in Harrisonburg. Please contact Robyn Puffenbarger, 540-908-7335 or rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu in advance if you plan to attend.

Bird Club Book Club, Oct 17, will discuss “The Lightkeepers” by Abbi Geni at a carry-in dinner at Elizabeth Ihle’s home at 6:30 PM. The book is a mystery set in the Farallon Islands off the coast of San Francisco. Please contact Elizabeth at eliza51@aol.com if you’d like to attend.

OCTOBER FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski*

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

Hillandale Monthly Walk, Thursday, October 10 with Tom Mizell: Meet at the Children's Playground parking lot at 8:00 AM.

Lake Shenandoah, Saturday, October 19, with Greg Moyers: Greg will lead a walk at Lake Shenandoah on Saturday, Oct. 19. 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.

TRIP REPORTS

Paul State Forest – Bill Benish

Seven of us met at Paul State Forest on September 6. Within sight of the parking area, we had Red-headed Woodpeckers and several other woodpeckers. They were also evident about a mile later at the middle farm road and again around three quarters of a mile further. We had almost no obvious migrants aside from a Veery until far into the walk. Several Baltimore Orioles appeared in fruit-laden tops of Wild Cherry. Warbler sightings included Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler and Black-throated Green Warbler. We also heard a loud sound of interest reminiscent of Sandhill Crane, but it seemed more likely to be a call from one of the Common Ravens. Although I missed the Wood Thrush and Scarlet Tanager seen by others, the group total was 43 species. Since this location is only about a quarter mile from our CBC circle center, I was grateful to explore the area with other birders in seasons other than winter.

Switzer Dam – Greg Moyers

Six members of the RBC attended the trip to Switzer Dam on September 11. As we made our way down the mountain, we made a couple of stops and picked up three vireo species – Blue-headed, Red-eyed, and Yellow-throated. We also got looks at the first of many Scarlet Tanagers and Black-throated Green Warblers, Black-and-white Warbler, and an American Redstart. Some of the group was able to watch a Broad-winged Hawk flush and fly across the road in front of our caravan. As we made our way past the lake, we found an Ovenbird and then encountered another group of birds and added Magnolia, Pine, and Worm-eating Warblers. In the camp areas beyond the bridge we found a Swainson’s Thrush and had a Bald Eagle fly over. On the way back out we added Red-breasted Nuthatch, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Osprey, and Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, and Black-throated Blue Warblers. We finished the trip with 10 warbler species and 40 total species.

Hillandale Park Monthly Walk – Tom Mizell

On 23 September 2019, Summer gave way to Fall at 3:58 AM. Four hours later 14 members of the Rockingham Bird Club and a guest began their first Hillandale Park birding trek of the new season. It was sunny and 61 degrees as we gathered. Our wish list included: Red-eyed Vireo, White-throated Sparrow, Brown Creeper, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Philadelphia Vireo, Wilson's Warbler and Gray-cheeked Thrush. (We did not see a single one! So, we decided to recycle the wish list in October.)

It was a nice fall day and we were treated to somewhat piercing calls of the Carolina Wren, the nasally sounds of Gray Catbirds and White-breasted Nuthatches, appeals from the Red-bellied Woodpeckers; and the typical boisterous medley from the seemingly ever-present Blue Jays. The Jays flew over us, many of them carrying peanuts in their beaks.

We enjoyed a lot of activity around the cabin as we tallied 15 species by 8:30 including Carolina Chickadee, American Robin, American Crow, Downy Woodpecker, European Starling, Mourning Dove, Northern Cardinal, Northern Flicker, Eastern Towhee, Great-crested Flycatcher, and a feeding flock of Cedar Waxwings. We all had “up close and personal looks” at a Cape May Warbler just behind the cabin as it fed at eye level within about 15 feet of the group. It extended its stay for several minutes, putting itself in prime position to be the most cooperative warbler of the day! Soon, American Redstarts; and Magnolia and Chestnut-sided Warblers were among the 15 early-bird species. Some of us got glimpses of a Magnolia as it chased a moth in a downward spiraling flight, plummeting from the leaf canopy overhead to almost the ground.

At the trail’s “Y” behind the cabin we saw a Ruby-throated Hummingbird perched about 20 feet high. Proceeding north, we were treated to several sightings of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Chimney Swifts were seen against the blue sky, and a Black-throated Green Warbler made an appearance before we arrived at the northwest-corner pedestrian bridge around 9:40, with a count of 25 species. It was still quite comfortable as the temperature was about 70 degrees.

We crossed the bridge to the chatter of American Goldfinches. As we walked past Shelter 12, we saw three lazily flying Turkey Vultures overhead. Along the paved road, Greg Moyers moved about at an accelerated pace as he spotted a vireo. Upon close examination it was a Warbling Vireo checking in at 10:00 AM.

A near-full moon was about 12 o'clock high as we neared the cabin bridge for our second crossing of Fall. As I focused the glasses on the moon, several Tree Swallows flew into the field of view, circling as high as this writer has ever seen them. It appeared for a moment they were enroute to the moon -- an interesting sight.

Six remaining birders walked the southwest loop and added Northern Mockingbird, House Finch and Chipping Sparrow. As we neared the trail fork behind the cabin, a Common Yellowthroat was seen in the low brush, and our sightings of the day finished at 33 species. We completed our walk around 11:30 AM. It was a great Fall day complete with several migrating Monarch Butterflies, Osage Orange fruit in abundance, and the interesting flight of the Praying Mantis. Join us on Thursday, October 10th at 8:00 AM as we meet in the Children's Playground Parking Lot. Help us find some of the wish list of birds listed above in paragraph one.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

William Leigh found a **Blue-winged Warbler** at Switzer Dam on Aug. 24. On the same date, William reported 30 **Semipalmated Sandpipers, Pectoral, Least, and Solitary Sandpipers, Lesser Yellowlegs**, and 60 **Killdeer** at the sod farm on Captain Yancey Rd near Elkton.

Diane Holsinger reported a **Wood Thrush** and an **Ovenbird** in her yard in Timberville on Sept. 1.

Shaphan Shank reported a singing **Whip-Poor-Will**, two **Eastern Screech-Owls**, and 11 **Common Nighthawks** at Union Springs on Sept. 2.

Two **Red-Necked Phalaropes**, a **Sanderling**, and a **Baird's Sandpiper** were reported near Timberville in early Sept.

William Leigh reported an **American Golden-Plover** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond on Sept. 7. William also reported this species at the same location on Sept. 18.

Huck Hutchens watched a **Bald Eagle** easting an opossum at Leonard's Pond on Sept. 8.

Greg Moyers reported three **American Golden-Plovers** at the intersection of W. Dry River Rd and Lumber Mill Rd west of Dayton on Sept. 10.

Diane Holsinger watched a **Bald Eagle** chase an **Osprey** in Bridgewater on Sept. 14.

William Leigh reported 12 **American Avocets** at Leonard's Pond on Sept. 15. The birds were gone by the following morning.

Greg Moyers reported a **Summer Tanager** and 16 species of warblers, including **Nashville**, **Blackpoll**, **Prairie**, **Cape May**, and **Canada**, at Switzer Dam on Sept. 17.

Diane Lepkowski reported four warbler species visiting her yard on Sept. 17: **Canada & Magnolia Warblers**; **Common Yellowthroat** and **American Redstart**.

A **Lark Sparrow** was reported at Leonard's Pond on Sept. 17. Several local birders were able to relocate the bird, along with a **Palm Warbler**, following the report. The following day, several birds reported nine **Lesser Yellowlegs** at the pond, along with the continuing **Least Sandpipers**, and **Blue-winged Teal**.

Greg Moyers reported a **Blue-winged Warbler** at Paul State Forest on Sept. 18.

Greg Moyers found a **Connecticut Warbler** sharing space in a low tree with a **Cape May Warbler**, a **Tennessee Warbler**, and a **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, at the Hensley Hollow Overlook on Skyline Drive in Rockingham Co. on Sept. 19.

Diane Lepkowski reported a **Tennessee Warbler** at her yard water feature near Harrisonburg on Sept. 21.

Swainson's Thrushes were found in groups of at least two or three on Sept. 25 by Diane Lepkowski, with two at home, and by Greg Moyers at both Hillandale Park and Paul State Forest. Greg also reported a **Gray-cheeked Thrush**, three **Wood Thrushes**, and a **Veery** at Paul Forest, along with four warbler species.

Also, on Sept. 25, Greg reported a **Philadelphia Vireo** and 12 warbler species at Hillandale Park.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Note from the Treasurer

This year the Executive Committee reviewed the membership rates and decided to increase dues to \$20 for individual membership and \$30 for family membership. We are also adding a student rate of \$10 for high school and college students. Membership benefits include our monthly programs, newsletter delivery (the Goldfinch Gazette, by email or U.S. mail, your choice) and field trip opportunities.

Please pay your dues promptly. Our by-laws state that *members who have not paid their dues by November 1 will be dropped from the roster and will no longer receive the newsletter.*

The good news is that you now have another option for paying your dues. **The new RBC website at rockinghambirdclub.com provides a method for paying for your renewal with a credit card via PayPal.** You can still pay for your membership at the club's Thursday meetings using cash or check or mail a check made out to "RBC" to:

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

2019 BIRD SEED SALE – Please support our club fundraiser.

Our 2019 Bird Seed Sale is ready to begin! Club members and past supporters should receive information and order forms in the mail by Friday, October 4. Our online ordering will be available starting that day as well at rockinghambirdclub.com.

Show your love of birds, appreciation for the club and support our sale with a purchase. Our seed is this year's crop, guaranteed fresh!

- **ORDERS DUE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 21st**
- **PICK UP DAY: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15th**

Help is needed on "Pick Up Day"! A sign up will be available at our club meeting on October 3rd or you can contact Kathy directly to volunteer.

Also, we need one or two more volunteers to make suet cakes for the sale. Please contact Kathy if you'd like to help.

Contact Kathy Byers for more information at 540-820-6517 or kkbyers77@gmail.com.

RBC Audit Volunteers Needed

If you can pay your own bills and balance a checkbook, this opportunity is for you! Our Club Bylaws (Article III, Section 5) state ". . . *The club account shall be presented for audit once each year.*"

We need a couple of non-Board Members to review our Treasurer's records for 7/1/2018 thru 6/30/2019. Please contact Treasurer, Audrey Shenk (ajshenk@gmail.com) or President, Debbie Harrison (woodshar@aol.com) ASAP. This is a short-term commitment.



Got Bird Seed Bags?

Earth Day Every Day (a new non-profit in Harrisonburg) needs empty bird seed (or other grain) non-biodegradable bags (25-50 lb.) to upcycle into reusable shopping bags (see photo). They are looking for PLASTIC bags, not paper ones. Look for a box in the back of the room to deposit bags at the September Bird Club meeting.

Second Breeding Bird Atlas of Virginia (VABBA2) – Please donate!

The Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas has a great story to tell:

- **More than 1,200 volunteers, 75,000+ eBird checklists, and observations in over 3,700 atlas blocks throughout Virginia.**
- **More than 200 species have been recorded across the Commonwealth, with 190 so far being confirmed as breeders.**

This volunteer effort the past four years has been truly monumental. Going into the last breeding season, however, there are a number of remote and difficult to reach places that the VSO needs to cover with paid observers.

Click [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hSrms-j-4&feature=youtu.be) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hSrms-j-4&feature=youtu.be>) to see a video about the important things we are learning and how **your donations will help us make a strong finish in the final season next year.**

Remember, the Breeding Bird Atlas will produce the most complete picture yet of where Virginia's birds live and breed, which is invaluable for their conservation. Every dollar you give helps secure their future! Thank you for your consideration and support.

Dan Bieker, President, Virginia Society of Ornithology

PHOTO GALLERY



Red-necked Phalarope

Photo credit: Greg Moyers



American Avocet

Photo credit: Greg Moyers



Cape May Warbler

Photo credit: Tom Mizell

Rockingham Bird Club
151 Deer Lick Lane
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VICE PRESIDENT: FIELD TRIPS - Diane Lepkowski

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On the Web: <https://rockinghambirdclub.com>