



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

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November 2019

NOVEMBER MEETING

DATE: Thursday, November 7, 2019

TIME: 7:00 PM

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

PROGRAM: "Birds of Alaska" by Dr. Marshall Faintich

We will take another birding adventure with Marshall to Alaska, the 49th state "North to the Future." This presentation highlights photos of woodland and pelagic avian species, along with some fascinating mammals, observed during a mid-summer, two-week exploration of south-central Alaska from Fairbanks to the Katmai peninsula. Interesting are northwestern species and juveniles of species that breed only in the far northern latitudes. Marshall is the author of "A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Wintergreen." His wildlife photos have appeared in newspapers, magazines, web sites, 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 rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu, in advance if you plan to attend.

Special note: The December 2019 and January 2020 RBC meetings will be held in the STRITE AUDITORIUM at VMRC. Also, our first meeting in 2020 will be January 9th, the SECOND Thursday of the month. This date change is only for the January 2020 meeting.

NOVEMBER FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski*

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

Hillandale Monthly Walk, Thursday, November 14 with Tom Mizell: Meet at the Children's Playground parking lot at 8:00 AM.

Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding, Highland Retreat - TENTATIVE date Thursday November 14, evening. Time and meeting place to be announced. We'll join Clair Mellinger who, with the help of Charles "Zig" Ziegenfus, has been studying and banding these intriguing little owls as they migrate. The trip is weather-dependent and may be postponed last minute in case of rain or windy conditions. Please contact Diane Lepkowski at dianelep1@yahoo.com if you're interested in attending.

TRIP REPORTS

Paul State Forest – Bill Benish

On October 4, eleven of us converged for another lengthy walk at Paul State Forest. Fruit trees and vines tended to yield the most birds. We ended up with just over 40 species including Swainson's and Wood Thrushes. Warblers included Ovenbird, American Redstart; and Black-and-white, Nashville, Hooded, Magnolia and Black-throated Blue Warblers. Thanks to everyone who was able to join! Checklist details at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S60343829> and <https://ebird.org/checklist/S60343948>

Hillandale Park Monthly Walk – Tom Mizell

On 10 October 2019, following an impressive early morning red sky, nine members of the Rockingham Bird Club gathered at Hillandale Park at 8 AM. The temperature was 43 and the sky was clear. Our wish-list birds included Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Brown Creeper. Guess which one showed up after the writer left the park? A special "Thanks" to Don Perkuchin and Randy Cline who each agreed to continue the walk as I needed to leave early.

The sun's rays broke through the playground trees at 7:50. Early birds included Carolina Wren, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay and American Crow. Canada Geese and Mallards were there for roll call too. By the time we reached the cabin we added Northern Flicker and Cardinals, American Robins, Pileated Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, Eastern Towhee and Phoebe and House Finch.

Just past the cabin we encountered several Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Magnolia Warbler grabbing a late breakfast in the cedars and brush. It was quite an enjoyable show. Grackles appeared and by 8:26 AM we listed 19 species. Gray Catbird, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers and Carolina Chickadee gave us 23 species by 9:10. Some American Goldfinches flew about in the vicinity of the concrete slab north of the cabin. Chimney Swifts sped quite high overhead along with some Turkey Vultures.

Tufted Titmouse showed up near the Northwest Pedestrian Bridge where we also found a Black-throated Blue. Great Blue Heron and Black Vultures were in the friendly skies. In this same area we also saw a small flock of Cedar Waxwings in some walnut trees. A Golden-crowned Kinglet and Scarlet Tanager captured the groups attention for several minutes. Thirty-three species at 10 AM. As distant church bells tolled, I reluctantly had to depart before the first loop was completed. The temperature was a pleasant 53 degrees and a Pileated Woodpecker drummed "good day".

Again, "Thanks" to those remaining folks who added Northern Parula, Swamp Sparrow, Flycatcher species and, finally, one of the target birds bringing the day's count to 37. Did you guess correctly? A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker let us know that some of our winter visitors have returned!

Lake Shenandoah – Greg Moyers

Five members of the RBC attended the walk at Lake Shenandoah on Oct. 19. It was sunny but chilly with the temperature just above freezing as we started. Early highlights included at least four Pied-billed Grebes, Blue-headed Vireo, Cedar Waxwings, and both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets. As we proceeded along the path, Tree Swallows flew overhead and we found Yellow-rumped Warblers and Song, White-throated, and Swamp Sparrows. Approaching the culvert, we found a Brown Creeper and a Tennessee Warbler feeding with several more kinglets and a Blue-headed Vireo. At the edge of the golf course a Pileated Woodpecker serenaded us from the top of a tall snag. Along the pine woods we found an Eastern Towhee and more Yellow-rumped Warblers,

Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and another Blue-headed Vireo. Our return trip produced a Gray Catbird and a small group of Chipping Sparrows. Back at the parking area we bid farewell to some of our group while the remaining attendees continued along the pollinator trail and then across the road to the pond trail. Here we were rewarded with several more highlights including Palm Warbler, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Bald Eagle. We ended the trip with 46 species.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Greg Moyers reported a **Philadelphia Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, and 12 warbler species, including **Nashville, Tennessee, Bay-breasted**, and **Cape May** at Hillandale Park on Sept. 25. On the same date, Greg found a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** along with **Swainson's Thrush, Wood Thrush**, and **Veery** at Paul State Forest.

Tom Mizell reported an **Eastern Screech-Owl** at Wildwood Park in Bridgewater on Sept. 26. The following day, Tom found a **Ruddy Duck** at Silver Lake.

Diane Holsinger had a **Wood Thrush** at her place in Timberville on Sept. 29.

Greg Moyers reported at least six **American Golden-Plovers** at the intersection of W. Dry River Rd and Lumber Mill Rd west of Dayton on Sept. 30. Greg had a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** and several warblers, including **Magnolia** and **Bay-breasted**, at Paul State Forest on the same date.

Greg Moyers has reported **Lincoln's Sparrows** at Hone Quarry several times in the past month, beginning on Oct. 2. Greg also reported an **American Woodcock** strutting across the road up to Reddish Knob just past the Briery Branch Gap intersection on Oct. 2.

Charles "Zig" Ziegenfus had his first **White-throated Sparrow** of the season at his Port Republic banding station on Oct. 5.

Annie Shank reported the first **White-crowned** and **White-throated Sparrows** of the season at the Shank's place in Spring Creek on Oct. 6.

William Leigh found a **Black-bellied Plover** among 13 **American Golden-Plovers** at the produce auction on Lumber Mill Rd on Oct. 5. The Black-bellied Plover and up to 19 American Golden-Plovers were reported at the auction and in the field across W. Dry River Road through Oct. 15.

William Leigh reported six **Pectoral Sandpipers** and a **Greater Yellowlegs** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond on Oct. 11. The following day, William found seven **Pectoral Sandpipers** at the same location and a **Wilson's Snipe** at Leonard's Pond.

Tom Mizell reported a **Northern Shoveler** at Silver Lake on Oct. 13.

Greg Moyers found several warblers and sparrows at Switzer Dam on Oct. 15. Highlights included **Lincoln's** and **Swamp Sparrows** and **Palm, Cape May, Black-throated Blue**, and **Tennessee Warblers**. Other nice finds on the trip included **Wild Turkey, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush**, and **Pied-billed Grebes**.

Diane Lepkowski had a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** visiting her feeder near Harrisonburg as late as Oct. 16.

Bill Benish reported a **Peregrine Falcon** having a meal along Eberly Rd in Dayton on Oct. 19.

Greg Moyers reported a **Palm Warbler** at Hone Quarry on Oct. 21 and again, with Dave Wendelken, on Oct. 24. Greg and Dave also had a **Winter Wren** and a **Lincoln's Sparrow**.

Diane Holsinger found a **White-winged Scoter** east of Timberville on Oct. 23.

A **dowitcher**, first reported at Leonard's Pond on Oct. 23, is now thought to be a juvenile **Long-billed Dowitcher**. Plumage, documented in many photos, and sound recordings by Diane Lepkowski seem to confirm ID of this rarity. Greg Moyers reported the bird was still present as of this Oct. 28 writing, despite nearly meeting the luncheon dining intentions of a visiting **Northern Harrier**. Yikes!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bird Club Book Club, November 21

The book is *The Inner Life of Animals: Love, Grief, and Compassion* by Peter Wohlleben and Jane Billingham. Please contact Elizabeth at eliza51@aol.com if you'd like to attend.

2019 BIRD SEED SALE

A HUGE "Thank You" to everyone that supported the club by purchasing bird seed!

Pick-Up Day is FRIDAY, November 15, 2:00-6:00pm

Find us at BFG Supply Company (formerly Wetsel's) Main Warehouse

961 N Liberty St, Harrisonburg

Contact Kathy Byers for more info or questions 540-820-6517, kkbyers77@gmail.com

Christmas Bird Count (CBC) – VARC Circle

Please mark your calendars for our annual Christmas Bird Count planned this year for Saturday, December 14, 2019. Sector Leaders are not yet finalized, but we hope to have as many as possible able to contribute again. Our most valuable contributions usually come from afield, and most of that is done by car. When we have more participants, we also tend to be able to expand our efforts walking and listening. For people living within the circle boundary, even from indoors a "feeder watcher" may be able to provide data to our count compiler - Bill Benish. Be sure to let Bill know if you think you may be able to participate. It's also a good time for past leaders and participants to touch base directly with each other about plans. Bill Benish, wcbenish@gmail.com, 540-908-7336

If you wish to see historic count data via web, you can enter our count circle code "VARC" through this link: <http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/Historical/ResultsByCount.aspx>

Our coverage intensity is best with more participants. The more leaders we have, the more room we have for people of all skill levels. Thanks also to everyone who has helped in the past!



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 November Bird Club meeting.



A rare Long-billed Dowitcher (juvenile) – Leonard's Pond 10/27/19

Photo credit: Diane Lepkowski



American Woodcock, traveling the road to Reddish Knob! 10/2/19

Photo credit: Greg Moyers, who held traffic until the bird moved on(!)

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GOLDFINCH GAZETTE - Denise Hoodock

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