



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLV

Number 5

January 2020

JANUARY MEETING

DATE: Thursday, January 9, 2020

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: ****NOTE CHANGE OF LOCATION** STRITE AUDITORIUM**, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, 1501 Virginia Avenue, Harrisonburg, VA 22802.

PROGRAM: Our Wonderful Wood Warblers by Bob Schamerhorn

Warblers are amongst our smallest, yet most brilliantly colored avian visitors. Most of these birds are only present in the Commonwealth for brief periods, during their spring and fall migrations, while a few reside and breed in the state. Many of our native Virginia species are represented in this presentation by professional photographer Bob Schamerhorn. Many warblers have entirely different plumages at different times of the year making them difficult to differentiate. Learn about identification of this diverse group of birds by sight, sound, season, and habitat. Or just sit and enjoy their sound and beauty. Bob, a Virginia native, has had a passion for both the outdoors and art since childhood. After high school, he studied Art and Design at Virginia Tech and has worked in art related fields ever since. Photography is an extension of the skills he uses in his vocation as a graphic artist.

Join us for dinner with Bob before the meeting: Bowl of Good, 831 Mt Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg, at 6 PM. Please contact Robyn Puffenbarger, 540-908-7335 or rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu, in advance if you plan to attend.

JANUARY FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski*

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

Hillandale Monthly Walk, Thursday, January 23, with Tom Mizell: Meet at the Children's Playground parking lot at 8:00 AM.

Highland County, Saturday, February 1st with Mike Shank: Along with enjoying the County's wonderful scenery, this may be your best chance to see wintering Golden Eagles. Meet at 7:30 AM at Bob-a-rea's parking lot on Rt. 42 in Bridgewater, across from the Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Department. Mike plans to return 3-4 PM. Bring lunch, snacks & drinks, and dress warmly; Highland is often ten degrees colder than Harrisonburg. Please contact Mike at tallwhiteoak@verizon.net or 540-810-7444 if you plan to attend.

TRIP REPORTS

Hillandale Park Monthly Walk, Thursday December 5 – Tom Mizell

I wish I had been able to attend the December 2019 walk. If one must miss a walk, try not to do it when a Bald Eagle shows up. Thanks to Dan Perkuchin and Randy Cline for agreeing to help lead the outing, especially on such a short notice. So, this is what happened while I was in North Carolina.

The temperatures were in the high 30s and it was a sunny day. Dan reported that 6 members of the RBC enjoyed the walk. It was noted that the birds were not moving about much but were found in a couple of active pockets. So, it sounds like it was a good “seek and find” outing. Dan sent me an ebird report and I list the sightings as follows: Mourning Dove, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Northern Mockingbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Northern Cardinal.

A total of 23 species were seen. Looks like a great day for woodpeckers, kinglets and six December bird club members. Dan's ebird report shows the number of species. Also, for those who might be interested the mileage was 2.2 miles to make the full “figure 8” circuit which this day took less than 2 hours.

I hope to see you and myself on the trail for our first Hillandale Park “Winter walk” in January 2020. Maybe we will see more Bald Eagles as the Virginia Wildlife calendar shows that Bald Eagles and Great Horned Owls begin nesting mid-January. Please join us for a morning walk on Thursday January 23 at Hillandale.

Christmas Bird Count (CBC) – Saturday, December 14 – Bill Benish

We held our Christmas Bird Count this year on Saturday, December 14, with challenging morning weather. We tied our record high of eleven feeder watcher participants at five different homes. Many of the 27 field participants surveyed during morning fog, rain and drizzle. In the afternoon, the sun finally poked through helping to increase our time afoot.

We tallied 67 species and 7,989 individual birds compared to last year's 72 species and 10,487 individuals. Our highest species count was 82 two years ago. The highest number of individual birds was 27,366 during the 1978 CBC. Nine birds tallied this year and not last year include Tundra Swan, Gadwall, Wild Turkey, Hermit Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Towhee, Fox Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird and Common Grackle. The following were seen last year and missed this year: Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Ruffed Grouse, Pied-billed Grebe, Black Vulture, Golden Eagle, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird and Pine Siskin. Also, during Count Week last year, we had Red Crossbill and Evening Grosbeak.

Species not mentioned above and encountered in only one of our six sectors include Green-winged Teal (American), Red-shouldered Hawk, Wilson's Snipe, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Red-headed Woodpecker, Fish Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher and Eastern Meadowlark. One particularly interesting bird was large like an eagle or Rough-legged Hawk and was seen briefly flying over. As we could not re-locate or photograph the bird, we did not include this in the list. We still await the year when we will be able to confirm our first Rough-legged Hawk.

The full list is normally not downloadable from the web until the following year as it's not official until after additional review by higher up editors. I'll be posting additional details through internet resources such as email and Facebook. A few folks requested a copy of the full spreadsheet, and I'll be able to email that within the next couple weeks. Please feel free to email me at wcbenish@gmail.com if you would like a spreadsheet or text copy.

Great thanks to the field participants, feeder watchers and the other leaders such as Matt Gingerich, Ken Ranck, Charles "Zig" Ziegenfus, Fletcher Bingham, Bob Eggleston, William Leigh and Kathy Byers. Diane Lepkowski, Greg Moyers, Mark Tanis, Mike Shank and Kathy & Art Fovargue also contributed greatly with extra coverage help.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski reported four **Common Loons** at Lake Shenandoah on Dec. 1. A lone **Common Loon** has been reported at Lake Shenandoah since Dec. 22.

Diane Lepkowski has continued to see the **Peregrine Falcon** that she originally reported on Nov. 21 in downtown Harrisonburg. On one occasion, Diane saw the falcon flying with another bird, which may have been a second Peregrine.

Diane Lepkowski, Dave Wendelken, and Greg Moyers reported four **Ring-billed Gulls** at Lake Shenandoah on Dec. 15. Greg and Diane saw a single **Ring-billed Gull** at the same location on Dec. 24.

While traveling along I-81 just north of Harrisonburg on Dec. 18, Gabriel Mapel spotted a possible **Rough-legged Hawk**. Gabriel refound and confirmed the **Rough-legged Hawk** along Old Furnace Road on Dec. 22.

Herb Myers reported a **Hermit Thrush** at his place in Keezletown on Dec. 21. He added a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** at his place on Dec. 24.

Diane Lepkowski reported 10 **Cackling Geese** at Lake Campbell on Dec. 21.

Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski reported a **Common Goldeneye** near Timberville on Dec. 21.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Calling All Squirrelers

That's right – "squirrelers". Are you someone who squirrels things away? Maybe RBC paper newsletters, meeting minutes or notes? Maybe photos or articles about club activities? Do you have any from the early days of the RBC? Maybe you have something else or something recent that tells the story of the RBC. If so, we'd love to hear from you.

The RBC is working on archiving the history of the club with the Special Collections Group at JMU Library. This project provides a way to permanently store both the digital and non-digital information about our club in one place. At the same time, it will all be available to our members and the general public.

If you have any material that you feel documents the history of the club, we'd love to see it. Please don't assume your item is not worthwhile or that "they probably already have it." Bits and pieces can tell a story. Donation of the items is preferred. But if you simply can't part with it, we're still

interested and can have it copied or scanned. JMU will evaluate what's needed to complete the collection. And, of course, they will have final say on what they can archive.

Please email Art Fovargue (art.fovargue@gmail.com) with a list of what materials you may have, or if you have questions, please see him or Kathy Fovargue at the next RBC meeting.

VSO's Winter field trip at the Outer Banks of North Carolina Jan 31-Feb 2

Make plans to join us for the VSO's Winter field trip at the Outer Banks of North Carolina January 31-February 2! The weekend's leaders include Bill Akers and Jerry Via, as well as VSO field trip co-chairs Lee Adams and Meredith Bell. We always have great waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors, along with a wide assortment of land birds.

To help us plan for the weekend, please register in advance. **Provide the names of participants in your party with a telephone number and email address** so we can contact you if needed. Register with Meredith Bell, trip coordinator, at merandlee@gmail.com or 804-824-4958. A detailed weekend itinerary will be sent via email to all registrants a few days before the trip.

VERY Important! All VSO field trips have a registration fee of \$20 for NON-members only. This fee will be applied to an individual membership that will be active until the end of 2020. If 2 or more people from the same family register, the registration fee is \$25, which covers a family membership. Groups of students accompanied by their instructor are exempt from this fee. Non-members can join in advance at <http://virginiabirds.net/VSO-Store.html> or pay the registration fee on the first evening of the event.

For more information, visit: <https://www.virginiabirds.org/events/field-trip-announcements/obx-2020>

BIRD SEED AVAILABLE

We purchased a few extra bags of seed. This is the seed we have available for purchase:

2 – 25 lb bags of Black Oil Sunflower Seed @ \$15 each

1 – 25 lb bag of Safflower (squirrels do not like this seed!) \$25

Contact Kathy Byers if you are interested kkbyers77@gmail.com or 820-6517 or see her at the club meeting. She will have the seed with her for easy pick up!





Partially leucistic House Finch– Dec 2019

Photo credit: Greg Moyers



Common Loon – Shen Lake – Dec 2019

Photo credit: Diane Lepkowski

Rockingham Bird Club
151 Deer Lick Lane
Broadway, VA 22815



PRESIDENT: Debbie Harrison
151 Deer Lick Lane
Broadway, VA 22815
Phone - 540-856-3058

VICE PRESIDENT: PROGRAMS - Robyn Puffenbarger

VICE PRESIDENT: FIELD TRIPS - Diane Lepkowski

SECRETARY: Anne Nielsen

TREASURER: Audrey Shenk

MEMBERS AT LARGE: vacant (2 positions)

GOLDFINCH GAZETTE - Denise Hoodock

EMAIL: info@rockinghambirdclub.com



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