



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

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April 2020

**DUE TO THE CURRENT COVID-19 VIRUS OUTBREAK,
THE APRIL MEETING IS CANCELLED.**

SECRETARY NEEDED IMMEDIATELY!!

We need a volunteer to step into the role of Secretary for the club. Please contact Debbie Harrison at 540-856-3058 or woodshar@aol.com if you are willing to help the club in this capacity.

Vice President for Programs Needed

As you may already know, our current VP for Programs, Robyn Puffenbarger, will be completing her 2-year commitment in June. Therefore, the club needs a volunteer to step forward and fill this role. Robyn has some programs already scheduled for the 2020-2021 program year.

APRIL FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski*

As of now, there are no scheduled field trips. Club members will be notified by email of any future trips we may be able to offer. We encourage birding only at, or close to, home. Stay safe, everyone, and we'll look forward to gathering in the future!

More from *Diane* -

On-line Resources, ways to stay involved, and more goodies to help you enjoy your "alone time:"

Donate to The Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2!

The project is in dire need of additional funding! From data analysis to publication, costs will be considerable. Using data compilation, analysis, and comparison with the first BBA (of 30 years ago), the goal is to evaluate trends. MOST IMPORTANTLY this will help guide future focus on preservation and protection of birds and our natural world. As we sail into the uncharted territory of managing, and hopefully minimizing, damage caused by man-made negative impact on global climate, this project will be CRITICAL. Please donate to support the Atlas!

<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/vsowebiste>

Join the Virginia Society of Ornithology: <https://www.viriniabirds.org/>

Check out eBird! Sign up, and report your yard sightings: <https://ebird.org/home>

Support one of the premier ornithological research organizations in the U.S., **become a member of Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology**, sponsor of eBird - <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home>

One of my favorites! – take this quiz and **learn about one of our MOST amazing songster's, the Wood Thrush's, migratory journey north** from Costa Rica to her Maryland breeding grounds. Timely, wonderful, and utterly amazing!

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/play-migration-game>

Explore iNaturalist to learn about and report/document other critters and plants you find:
<https://www.inaturalist.org/home>

Consider joining the National Audubon Society – benefits are many, and our contributions are key!
<https://www.audubon.org/>

TRIP REPORTS

Hillandale Park – Tom Mizell, Randy Cline, Kathy Byers

[*Editor's note:* While the bird walk was cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak, several members decided to gather for the first walk of spring.]

A big “Thank You” to Randy Cline and Kathy Byers for reporting their observations for the first Full Day of Spring March 20, 2020 Hillandale Park. The following is Randy's report and the birds from both their reports.

Seven brave souls gathered at 8 AM, though the spring Club walk was officially cancelled. Targets were brown creeper and any warbler. Temperature a balmy 59 degrees with a southerly wafting wind. Our health tip of the day was "social distancing." We started at the cabin bridge and realized that we had lost some old friends. Many ash trees have been chopped down due to infestation. The log cabin is no longer standing. We perused the park and returned to the parking area at 10:30 AM.

We saw or heard 29 species of birds: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, White-breasted Nuthatch, Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, American Robin, Great Blue Heron, Mourning Dove, Eastern Towhee, Northern Cardinal, European Starling, Carolina Wren, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Common Grackle, Northern Flicker, American Crow, Fish Crow, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Tufted Titmouse, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Dark-eyed Junco, Carolina Chickadee, Field Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Eastern Bluebird.

A good time was had by all, kind regards, Randy

Tom's suggestion: As we move through uncertain times I suggest that those that are interested keep a bird sighting list for your yard, nearby park, etc. - wherever you might enjoy nature in these coming days. Send your one-day list with location to me and I will be happy to compile sightings for an article in the Gazette. May I suggest you do this the first week of April. You might even count on April 1. Or bottom line any day in April that suits you. I wonder how many species we might total.

I look forward to when we can once again enjoy birds, nature, and each other's company as we have so many times before. Seeing the photo from Hillandale on March 20 gives a hint of what a fun group that I am grateful to be a part.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Herb Myers had an up-close encounter with a **Hermit Thrush** at his place in Keezletown on Feb. 21. While pumping water for his chickens, Herb noticed the thrush fly to within 4-5 ft and heard it vocalizing softly. With everything frozen over, Herb suspected the bird was interested in a drink. Before stepping away, Herb pumped out a little water onto the rocks and ground and the thrush immediately flew in and drank!

Mike Smith had a singing **Pine Warbler** and a singing **Eastern Phoebe** near his place in Elkton on Feb. 25.

Greg Moyers reported an **Eastern Screech-Owl** at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU on Feb. 25.

On Feb. 27 Robin Puffenbarger and her ornithology class reported a **Bufflehead** at Silver Lake, a **Ring-necked Duck** at the RMH Ponds, **American Wigeon** and **Ring-necked Ducks** at Lake Campbell, and a **Northern Pintail** and **Green-winged Teal** at Lake Shenandoah.

Mike Smith reported **Common Mergansers** along Captain Yancey Rd near Elkton on Feb. 27. On March 5, Mike had a **Wood Duck** and a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** at the same location.

Diane Lepkowski reports that the wintering **Peregrine Falcon** in downtown Harrisonburg was still being seen as of Feb. 28.

Mike Smith reported a **Bald Eagle** near Elkton and **Northern Shovelers** at Silver Lake on March 1.

Wilson's Snipe have been regularly reported by multiple birders at the Fort Lynne Rd pond since early March.

Tree Swallows have returned to the area with reports beginning in early March.

Greg Moyers reported a **Merlin** with prey along Breckenridge Ct in Harrisonburg on March 3. Greg reports this is the fifth time over a period of 15 years that he has seen a **Merlin** using the same snags.

Herb Myers had a singing **Field Sparrow** at his place in Keezletown on March 3.

Greg Moyers reported two **Greater White-Fronted Geese** at Lake Campbell on March 7.

Greg Moyers and Barbara Andes spotted a **Eurasian Collared-Dove** in the Church Street and Mason Street areas in Broadway on March 8 and again on March 15.

Lynn Whitmore reported and photographed an **American Coot** at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU on March 8. It continued there at least a few days.

Greg Moyers reported a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at the pond along Fort Lynne Rd on March 13.

Diane Holsinger reported five sparrow species, including **Fox Sparrow** and **Chipping Sparrow**, at her place in Timberville on March 16.

Mike Smith reported a **Purple Finch** at his place near Elkton and a pair of **Common Mergansers** on the Shenandoah River near Rt. 33 in Elkton on March 17.

Greg Moyers reported **Northern Rough-Winged Swallows** on Dinkel Avenue near Bridgewater on March 19.

Kevin Shank reported a **Blue-headed Vireo** at his place at Union Springs on March 20.

Diane Lepkowski reported a **Louisiana Waterthrush** at Madison Run Fire Rd on March 20. On March 21 at the same location, Diane, Dave Wendelken, and Greg Moyers heard **Blue-headed Vireos** and a **Barred Owl** calling.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bluebird Trail – Debbie Harrison

The Rockingham Bird Club, with the help and support of the Rockingham County Fair Association, has established a ‘Bluebird Trail’ of nest boxes at the Rockingham Fair Grounds. The trail needs MONITORS to check the boxes on a weekly basis (April thru August) which takes about 1 hour.

People interested in volunteering **1 HOUR per MONTH**, will be joining a monitoring team (including mentoring) & given an orientation on nest box monitoring and the protocol used for collecting and reporting data.

If you have a home nest box (or trail) that you monitor, you can register your trail as well. Contact Debbie at woodshar@aol.com or call her at 540-856-3058.

Archiving the RBC history

Last week we collected from Charles Ziegenfus (“Zig”) RBC scrapbooks covering May 1978 to December 1996. These contain lots of good history and information. Thank you to all in the past who put these together. We assume these were assembled by the Club’s Historians &/or Secretaries over the years. If anyone has other details how these came to be, we’d be interested in that bit of history.

Perhaps these are the only RBC scrapbooks in existence, but if anyone has a bead on any others, please let us know. It would especially be worthwhile to fill in the history from the Club’s start in 1974 to 1978.

As always, if you are providing a nesting site or other habitat for other documents or articles that you think talk about the history of our bird club, please let us know.

Art & Kathy Fovargue, art.fovargue@gmail.com



HAPPY 45th
ANNIVERSARY
ROCKINGHAM
BIRD CLUB



Hillandale bird walk participants practicing “social distancing”
March 20, 2020

Rockingham Bird Club
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VICE PRESIDENT: PROGRAMS – Robyn Puffenbarger

VICE PRESIDENT: FIELD TRIPS – Diane Lepkowski

SECRETARY: VACANT

TREASURER: Audrey Shenk

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Kathy Fovargue, Martha Faw

GOLDFINCH GAZETTE – Denise Hoodock

EMAIL: info@rockinghambirdclub.com



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