



# Goldfinch Gazette

## The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

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**DUE TO THE CURRENT CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK,  
THE JUNE 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](mailto: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.

### **Election of Officers Postponed**

Election of officers was supposed to be held at the May meeting; however, considering the current cancellation, the existing officers will continue until we meet again, except for Secretary.

### **SUMMER FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski***

**Hillandale Monthly Walks, Friday, June 19 (last day of spring), Tuesday, July 21 and Wednesday, August 19 with Tom Mizell:** Meet at 8 AM at the main shelter. Depending on the turnout we may form small groups. We plan to be careful and considerate of the challenging times, requiring everyone maintain 6' apart. I understand the birds miss us and look forward to our return! Should conditions be unfavorable at the scheduled time for any of these group walks, we will cancel. Stay safe and may the good times surround us.

### **THE CALIFORNIA CONDOR – *Dr. Robyn Puffenbarger***

The California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) is an iconic, large scavenger of western North America. The genus had five different species across the continent, using the carcasses of the megafauna that roamed the continent prior to 40,000 years ago for food. The California Condor is the only remaining member of the group, using elk and other large herbivore remains to survive. Human

impacts on habitat and the use of lead shot, which is toxic to birds that consume the lead left in items they scavenge, sent the population into steady decline in the 20th century.

In 1987, the remaining 23 adult California Condors were taken from the wild for a captive breeding program. The recovery efforts are directed by a number of groups including the San Diego Zoo and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Since condors do not breed until they are 5-6 years old, lay one egg and raise one offspring every other year, in the wild the population would have little chance to recover. Captive breeding programs milestones start in 1991 and 1992, when the first condors raised in captivity were released near the Grand Canyon in Arizona plus in several sites in California. The first wild fledged condor in 2003, and in 2015 more condors were born in the wild than died.

After graduation from Bridgewater College, Jessy Wilson (2019) worked with banding birds on a southward migration off the coast of Canada, then she headed out west for a position monitoring California Condors. She put together a PowerPoint and narrates the slide show to give us more information about the condors. We hope to have the video (MP4) file available on the Rockingham Bird Club webpage (<https://rockinghambirdclub.com/>) for you to enjoy.

## BIRD SIGHTINGS

Mike Smith reported several good finds, including **Ruffed Grouse**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, and several warblers, including **Prairie**, **Hooded**, **Black-throated Blue**, **Black-throated Green**, and **Pine**, while hiking from Tilghman Rd to Wolf Ridge in western Rockingham County on April 26. Mike had a **Bald Eagle** near Montezuma on the same date. Mike found **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Spotted Sandpiper**, and **Blue-winged Teal** at Leonard's Pond the following day.

Debbie Harrison reported a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** at her place near the Rockingham/Shenandoah County line on April 26. Singing **Wood Thrushes** were heard in the following days.

Matt Gingerich reported a total of 46 **Broad-winged Hawks** migrating over his place in Linville on April 27. **Ospreys**, **Bald Eagle**, and **Double-crested Cormorant** were also seen flying over and **Northern Waterthrush**, **Ovenbird**, and **Swamp Sparrow** were seen around the property.

Ken Ranck found three **Forster's Terns** at Silver Lake on April 27.

Diane Holsinger had a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** visit her feeder in Timberville on April 27. On May 1, Diane hosted three **Indigo Buntings** and a **Red-headed Woodpecker**.

Matt Gingerich found a **Black-bellied Plover** at the Weavers Rd pond on April 28.

Shaphan Shank reported an early **Acadian Flycatcher** and an early **Eastern Wood-Pewee**, along with 28 **Ovenbirds** and **Cape May** and **Black-throated Blue Warblers** at Union Springs on April 29.

Bill Benish, Randy Cline, and Bob Eggleston reported a **Yellow-breasted Chat** at Hillendale Park on April 29.

Mike Smith reported **Baltimore Orioles** and a **Bald Eagle** on Captain Yancey Rd and a **Warbling Vireo** at the Elkton boat landing on April 30.

Kathy Byers, Lauren Jefferson, Bill Benish, Randy Cline, and Bob Eggleston found a tree-roosting **Common Nighthawk** at Hillendale Park on May 1. The nighthawk has been re-found on multiple dates since.

Richard Whelden reported a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** and a **Baltimore Oriole** visiting his feeders in Rockingham County on May 1.

Greg Moyers reported **Red-breasted Mergansers**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, and 15 warbler species, including **Nashville**, **Cerulean**, **Blackburnian**, and **Prairie**, at Switzer Dam on May 2.

Ken and Mildred Ranck counted 10 **Whip-poor-wills** at Union Springs on May 2. They also heard the continuing **Sora** at the Nazarene Church Rd Wetland.

Greg Moyers reported **White-eyed Vireo**, **Veery**, and **Wilson's** and **Nashville Warblers** at Paul State Forest on May 3. Greg reported a **Bay-breasted Warbler** at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum on the same date.

Robyn Puffenbarger and Bill Benish found a **Bobolink** at the Nazarene Church Rd Wetland and **Grasshopper Sparrows** along Spring Creek Rd on May 3.

Greg Moyers reported **Bobolinks** at Goods Mill Rd on May 5.

Mike Smith reported at least five **Red Crossbills** at Briery Branch Gap and **Wood Ducks** and the **Sora** at Nazarene Church Rd Wetland on May 6.

Greg Moyers reported a **Willet** and at least 15 yellowlegs, mostly Lesser, at a pond on Fort Lynne Rd on May 6.

At her home near Harrisonburg, Diane Lepkowski had a **Lincoln's Sparrow** on May 6, and a male **Golden-winged Warbler** on May 7 (both at a water feature).

Greg Moyers reported a **Willow Flycatcher** at the Cook's Creek Arboretum in Bridgewater and a **Common Loon** on Lake Shenandoah on May 7.

Tim Hulings reported a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, an **Indigo Bunting**, a **Bald Eagle**, and a **Green Heron** at his farm in Elkton.

Greg Moyers reported one, and possibly two, **Mourning Warblers** at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU on May 8. On the same date, Greg had a **Cliff Swallow** at Leonard's Pond.

Mike Smith reported a possible **Willet** along Spring Creek Rd on May 9.

William Leigh reported two **Semipalmated Plovers**, along with **Least**, **Spotted**, and **Solitary Sandpipers** and **Greater Yellowlegs** at Leonard's Pond on May 9.

Matt Gingerich reported a **Black Tern** at Lake Terrace on May 9. The tern was spotted again the following day.

Greg Moyers, Diane Lepkowski, and Dave Wendelken reported a **Lincoln's Sparrow** at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum on May 9.

Mike and Evelyn Shank reported a flock of **Bobolinks** on Lumber Mill Rd west of Dayton on May 10.

Greg Moyers and Barbara Andes reported a **Yellow-breasted Chat**, a **Swamp Sparrow**, and a **Lincoln's Sparrow**, as well as 14 warbler species, including **Northern Waterthrush**, **Tennessee**, **Nashville**, **Cape May**, and **Magnolia**, at Paul State Forest on May 10.

Matt Gingerich bagged 121 species on a county "Big Day" on May 10. Highlights included four **Black-billed Cuckoos** at Paul State Forest, a singing **Winter Wren** on the Flagpole Knob Rd, three **Soras** at Nazarene Wetland, 14 **Semipalmated Plovers** at Lake Shenandoah (as well as 12 at Oakwood Drive) and **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at Leonard's Pond.

Greg Moyers reported a **Canada Warbler** at Paul State Forest on May 14.

William Leigh found a **Dunlin** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond on May 15. The following day, William found a **Sanderling** at the same location.

Crista Cabe reported the **Black-crowned Night-Herons** at the Cargill plant in Dayton on May 15.

Greg Moyers reported a **Blue-winged Warbler** at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum on May 15. Later that morning at the Arboretum, Diane Lepkowski added **Canada, Bay-breasted and Blue-winged Warbler**, some bathing in the stream.

Diane Lepkowski had a **Tennessee Warbler** at her place near Harrisonburg on May 16. The real highlight of the day, however, was a bird that was confirmed by David Allen Sibley to be a hybrid **Mourning Warbler x Common Yellowthroat!** The bird, a male, was seen repeatedly through May 20 (joined that last day by a female **Common Yellowthroat...no interaction noted!**)

Ken Ranck reported a **Red-necked Phalarope** at Leonard's Pond on May 17.

William Leigh found 18 warbler species, including **Blackpoll, Bay-breasted, Canada, Tennessee, and Cerulean**, at Switzer Dam on May 17.

Mike Smith found a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** on Massanutten Mountain on May 17.

Diane Holsinger found seven **Red-necked Phalaropes** and two **Dunlins** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on May 21. The following day a total of nine phalaropes was reported there.

Matt Gingerich found and recorded a calling **Alder Flycatcher**, a rarity for our area, on his Linville property on May 21. The bird stuck around and subsequently sang, which clinched the ID, in the following days. On May 23, Matt heard a **Sandhill Crane** bugling in the distance from his place.

On May 23, Diane Lepkowski reported a male **Magnolia Warbler** at her yard waterfall. Also, this day, she and Dave Wendelken found at least six **Semipalmated Plovers**; nine **Least** and four **Spotted Sandpipers** at Lake Shenandoah's mudflats (the Lake is drained down, awaiting dam repair).

William Leigh found a **Snowy Egret** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond on May 24. Per RBC records this is just the third Rockingham County record, and the *latest spring record date* per both RBC records and Virginia Birdlife Gold book (prior records May 17-18, 1986 by Ken Ranck, and another bird early May 1992 by Charles Ziegenfus).

Herb and Sarah Myers have had a **Blue Grosbeak** and **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** at their place in Keezletown in late May. On May 23, Herb and Sarah saw a **Red-headed Woodpecker** entering a nest hole in Singers Glen.

On May 25, Diane Lepkowski's yard bird reports included a female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** and a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**.

A **Mourning Warbler** was reported to eBird along the Bother Knob Rd on May 25. On May 26, William Leigh found two **Mourning Warblers**, and saw and audio-recorded a singing **Alder Flycatcher** at this location.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Archiving the RBC history – Art Fovargue

We have gone through the RBC scrapbooks (Jan 1978 through Dec 1996) and they contain a ton of great information including all but one of the newsletters for that time span. Some of the things we've learned is that there was a planning meeting for the RBC in December 1974, initiated by Phil Cosminsky. The first official general meeting was in January 1975 & there were 58 charter members.

Here are a few things we need and would love to have to include in the archives:

1) Does anyone have any newsletters from the 1<sup>st</sup> three years, 1975 – 1977? Again, if you don't want to part with them, we can get them copied. Also missing the September 1986 newsletter (note: don't be tricked, the September 1987 newsletter was mislabeled as 1986; the true September 1986 newsletter should announce a potluck dinner on Thursday, Sept 4, 1986 for the September meeting). And we're also missing the June 2009 issue.

2) Does anyone have a list of the 58 charter members? We have identified 20 with certainty and have another 17 suspects. If you are a charter member, please let us know to be sure you are included. Whether or not you are a charter member, please send us a list of folks you know who were charter members.

3) RBC patches. If you have any of the versions of the RBC patch, we think this is something the JMU Library would like to include in the collection. It is totally understandable if one wouldn't want to part with their patch(es), but at worst, they could be copied too. (Historical note: in the fall of 1978 it was discussed whether the Am. Goldfinch or the Downy Woodpecker should be on the patch).

Of course, if you have any other documents or articles that you think speak to the history of our bird club, please let us know. Thanks, and have a safe & fun summer.

Art & Kathy Fovargue

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### **Bird Seed Sale Feedback Wanted!**

Did you purchase bird seed from us last fall? We would greatly appreciate any feedback you might have regarding the quality of the products or the process itself.

Please send your thoughts to Kathy Byers at [kkbyers77@gmail.com](mailto:kkbyers77@gmail.com).  
Thank you again for your support!



Mourning Warbler x Common Yellowthroat hybrid

Photo credit: Diane Lepkowski



Common Nighthawk – Hillandale Park 5/1/2020

Photo credit: Greg Moyers





Golden Winged Warbler

Photo credit: Diane Lepkowski

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

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