



Goldfinch Gazette
The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club
<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLVI

Number 2

Oct 2020

VIRTUAL CLUB MEETINGS, via ZOOM, WILL NOW TAKE THE PLACE OF IN-PERSON CLUB MEETINGS, AT LEAST THROUGH THE END OF THE YEAR. SEE MORE INFORMATION ON PAGE 2 OF THIS NEWSLETTER.

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

Robyn Puffenbarger completed her 2-year commitment as VP of Programs in June. However, she has graciously continued to provide programs through Zoom meetings for the remainder of 2020.

The club needs a volunteer to step forward and fill this role. Please consider giving your time to this important and necessary roll in our club. There may be some programs already scheduled for 2021.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

While we are being very careful and protecting ourselves from the ongoing threat due to the pandemic, our club needs to stay “in business” and membership dues are important. Please remember 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 1, 2020 will be dropped from the Club roster and mailing lists.

DUES: Individual: \$20, Family: \$30, Student: \$10 Pay for your membership online at <https://rockinghambirdclub.com/join-or-renew/> using a credit card via PayPal or mail a check made out to “RBC” to: Audrey Shenk, RBC Treasurer, 949 Northfield Ct., Harrisonburg, VA 22802

VIRTUAL CLUB MEETING via ZOOM

DATE: Thursday, October 1, 2020

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: VIRTUAL via ZOOM

PROGRAM: *Listening in to the Acoustic Ecology of Birds* presented by Dr. Dana Moseley

Dr. Dana Moseley is a sensory ecology who focuses on birdsong and communication through noise. She will discuss the function of birdsong and how communication is impacted by anthropogenic noise. Human-made noise is low frequency (pitched) and often overlaps with the lower frequency sounds that birds make, thus masking and impeding their communication. Dr. Moseley examines how songs have changed through learning and cultural evolution as well as other more immediate mechanisms. She investigates these questions through studies on new world sparrows and gray catbirds.

Please plan to join us virtually on Thursday October 1st at 7 PM via ZOOM! Click on the link below and join the meeting using the Meeting ID and passcode listed. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Robyn Puffenbarger at rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu or 540-908-7335.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://bridgewatercollege.zoom.us/j/93239598197?pwd=cmdvSTRoU2VLcVhuNmxei9NRDBIQTO9>

Meeting ID: **932 3959 8197**

Passcode: **752072**

If you would like to join the meeting using your smart phone, tap on one of the mobile numbers listed below. You will have audio but no video unless you have the Zoom mobile app, in which case you will have audio and video.

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,93239598197# US (Chicago)

+19294362866,,93239598197# US (New York)

Meeting ID: **932 3959 8197**

If you know how to Zoom and just want to pop in, please do! It will be nice to see faces again! If you have never used Zoom, take a few minutes to check out this information from Zoom:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-meeting>

FIELD TRIPS - Diane Lepkowski

**** Most field trips have been postponed for the foreseeable future due to concerns regarding the coronavirus pandemic.**

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Hillandale Walk, Tuesday, September 22, 2020 – Tom Mizelle

It was sunny and chilly at 8:00 AM in the morning at Hillandale Park. The last hours of summer played out for 6 members of the Rockingham Bird Club. As the sun warmed the treetops at the main shelter

there was a lot of “bird activity” to greet us as 4 of us arrived at 8:00 AM. Perhaps due to this great deal of bird activity we promptly started our search. The usual “form a circle introductions and discussion touching on safety and a bird wish list” gave way to the automatic donning of masks and unspoken communications regarding social distancing as we gathered.

In the first half hour we observed the usual Blue Jays (chattering as always and flocks of 1-3 dozen passed overhead at least a couple times, at least one Jay carrying a peanut in the shell in its beak). We saw White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Chickadee and Flycatcher sp. Kathy Byers spotted our first and second warblers of the day—a very energetic Black-throated Green flitted about and a less noticeable Black-and-white was seen walking the limbs. A female Scarlet Tanager appeared briefly working in the treetops. Tufted Titmouse, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Common Grackle made their appearances with their contrasting flair. The calls of Eastern Wood Pewee, Eastern Towhee, Carolina Wren and Northern Flicker sounded from different directions in the cool air / 40 degrees but quite sunny. By 8:30 and still close to the main shelter we enjoyed at least 16 species.

The shelter trees provided a good spot, but we decided it was time to move counterclockwise toward the Northwest Corner. As we approached the pedestrian bridge, we met Anne Nielsen as she had traversed the first trail loop clockwise to catch up with us. She arrived about the same time as the mowing machine that was mowing along the stream channel, so we backtracked our way to the shelter again. We added Mourning Dove along the way. More activity in the shelter treetops as Fletcher Bingham spotted a pair of American Redstarts. Art Fovargue rolled in on his bike and after a brief visit he had to leave. However, within 5 minutes he cycled back to report a sighting of a Cooper's Hawk near the Children's Playground. Thank you, Art!

Fall was officially drawing near as we approached the pedestrian bridge where the log cabin once proudly stood. A group of House Finches decorated the cedar treetops. Don Perkuchin joined us in the last minutes of Summer. We paused a few minutes and posed for a photo op on the bridge. Fall arrived as smiles showed through our masks. In the photo are Fletcher Bingham, Kathy Byers, Anne Nielsen, Linda Miller, Tom Mizell and Don Perkuchin. Two birders had to leave after the photo so our Summer to Fall team was back to our starting number of four.

We were drawn to the brushy area to the south of the old cabin site. A Gray Catbird was one of the first of Fall to appear. It appeared to have an encounter with a white breasted bird that was a slight bit larger. It was a Black-billed Cuckoo. As we were trying to get more looks at the Cuckoo a flock of Cedar Waxwings flew in close and landed. American Goldfinches and Chimney Swifts flew overhead. The Cuckoo was now in hiding and we walked across the cabin site and picked up Brown Thrasher as it made its clicking sound.

We arrived at the fork in the trail just beyond the cabin site and it was decision time. We voted to go right. But as one of the group voted to go left, we went left for a 100 yards or so. A Towhee was calling and was very close—we were determined to see it. As we sought it, we added warbler species and Black Vulture. Now turning around to head towards the Northwest Corner, Kathy spotted movement on the ground and under some trees. About this time, we were joined by Joe Ritchie as he paused in his morning walk to see what we were looking for. It was an Ovenbird! Good thing one of the four voted to go left as we got to see both the Ovenbird and to meet Joe.

A Downy Woodpecker was the last to be added to our species list of the day giving us a total of 29. No, make that 30 species as somewhere along the walk an American Robin bobbed into my notes! Hope to see you on the trail this Fall!

BIRD SIGHTINGS

William Leigh reported an **American Golden Plover** and **American Pipits** at a field along Lumber Mill Rd on Aug. 29. On Sept. 1, the plover was joined by a **Ruddy Turnstone**, **70 Pectoral Sandpipers**, two **Semipalmated Plovers**, and hundreds of **Killdeer**.

Mike and Evelyn Shank were treated to nice views of a **Northern Waterthrush** on their deck in Bridgewater on Aug. 29.

On Aug 30, Karen Shank reported an immature **Mourning Warbler** hopping around just outside their kitchen window. Other yard visitors included a **Canada Warbler** Aug 21 and **Cape May Warbler** on 9/4.

Mike Smith heard a **Hermit Thrush** calling at his place near Elkton on Aug. 30. On Sept. 19, Mike hosted a **Winter Wren**.

Diane Lepkowski had two **Canada Warblers**, a **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, and a **Black-and-white Warbler** at her place near Harrisonburg on Sept. 1. On Sept. 14, Diane hosted a **Wilson's Warbler** and added a **Philadelphia Vireo** to her yard list on Sept. 15. On Sept 21, visitors included **Ovenbird** and **Northern Parula**.

Matt Gingerich found a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** in a field along W. Dry River Rd west of Dayton on Sept. 3. The sandpiper, along with two **Ruddy Turnstones**, and an **American Golden Plover** were later seen at the above-mentioned field on Lumber Mill Rd before returning to the W. Dry River Rd field later the same afternoon.

Eurasian Collared Doves have been reliably reported on Lumber Mill Rd and along Ottobine Rd near Montezuma.

Tom Mizell reported **Pied-billed Grebe**, **Blue-winged Teal**, **Great Egret**, **Black-crowned Night Heron**, and **Osprey** at Silver Lake on Sept. 4.

Vic Buckwalter had an **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** in his yard in Keezletown on Sept. 4.

Herb Myers has reported three families of **Red-headed Woodpeckers**, totaling 11 birds, at Starry Meadows in Singers Glen on Sept. 5 and Sept. 12.

Ken Rank reported hundreds of swallows flying over his place in Mt. Crawford on Sept. 7 and 8. Also on Sept. 8, Mike Smith reported 200 **Chimney Swifts** entering the chimney at the Elkton Elementary School.

Matt Gingerich had an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** hunting from the top of a snag at his place in Linville on Sept. 9. Matt mentioned that he's been checking that snag for years waiting for the arrival of that species. On Sept. 12, Matt had a nice group of birds at his neighbor's woodlot, including **Blue-winged**, **Bay-breasted**, **Nashville**, **Tennessee**, and **Cape May Warblers**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, and many others.

William Leigh reported an **American Golden Plover**, **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, and **Pectoral Sandpipers** at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction on Lumber Mill Rd on Sept. 12. The following day, William reported a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** and four **American Golden Plovers** at this location. In subsequent days, at least three **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** and 22 **American Golden Plovers** were reported.

Mike Smith watched a **Cooper's Hawk** dive on, and miss, a **Belted Kingfisher** while kayaking the Shenandoah River between Elkton and Shenandoah on Sept. 14.

Harold Jones reported a **Black Tern** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond on Sept. 14.

Greg Moyers reported a **Philadelphia Vireo** at Hillendale Park on Sept. 15.

Mike Smith reported a **Great Egret** at the Merck Swamp south of Elkton on Sept. 17. **Great Egrets** have also been reliably seen along Rt. 42 near Williamsburg Rd through the first half of September.

Matt Gingerich and his son found two **Connecticut Warblers** along FR 85 on Shenandoah Mountain south of Briery Branch Gap on Sept. 18.

Mike Smith had a **Winter Wren** at his place near Elkton on Sept. 19.

Diane Holsinger had a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at her place in Timberville on Sept. 20.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Suet Cake Sale

Wonderful News!! Karen and Annie Shank have graciously offered to make their amazing homemade suet cakes in exchange for donations to the Rockingham Bird Club.

Orders will be taken September 14 through **October 9**. (Note the end date change from previous communication.) Please call the Shanks directly at 540-828-4247 Mondays-Saturdays to place your order and arrange pick up. Orders will be picked up at the Shank's home at 7314 Spring Creek Road, Bridgewater VA, 22812. Please see below for directions. Donations of \$2.50 per suet cake would be appreciated. Checks may be made to Rockingham Bird Club.

No Sunday orders please.

Directions from North Bridgewater VA: Head South on VA-42/S Main St, Cross over the bridge and turn right onto State Rte 727. Continue 3.4 miles. Turn right onto State Rte 613. Continue .9 miles. The Shank's home is on the right. There are signs at their driveways that say Karen and Everett Shank SVO Chicken/Deer Creek Farm.

A big THANK YOU to Joe and Ruth Shank for donating cornmeal for the suet!

Spotting Scope for Sale

Elizabeth Ihle would like to sell an Eagle Optics Angled Raven Spotting Scope with a 20x60x Eye Piece along with a Manfrotto 128RC Micro Head and 190 D tripod all in excellent condition. It was used about four or five times and comes with complete paperwork. Please call 540-421-5257 and leave a message or email elizaihle@gmail.com. Asking \$300.

Shop and Support RBC

Do you like to shop on Amazon.com? Do you like to support your local bird club? Now you can do both at the same time! Just visit AmazonSmile and select the Rockingham Bird Club as your charity of choice. Remember to go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> to do your Amazon shopping. The Rockingham Bird Club will earn a percentage from the purchases you make. It is absolutely FREE to you and does not increase the cost of what you buy in any way.

Mitchell A Byrd Award

The Mitchell A. Byrd Award recognizes outstanding scientific achievement in the field of ornithology. Dr. Clair Mellinger was nominated by Dr. John Spahr, who noted his extensive teaching career at Eastern Mennonite University, involvement with the VSO for decades, membership with local Rockingham Bird Club, participation in Breeding Bird Surveys and efforts with the Northern Saw-Whet Owl banding project.



2020 Kestrel Box Monitoring in Highland County (excerpt from the VSO Newsletter) *By Patti Reum*

The most exciting aspect of 2020 season was that Charles Ziegenfus (Zig) came over on 2 Saturdays in May and June and banded kestrels in a total of 22 boxes. Bands were placed on 96 chicks and one adult female. Banding birds has been a goal of this project since I started monitoring so having Zig join the team is monumental. He plans to return to do some winter banding and resume banding in 2021. This will obviously give us much more information on where our birds are going. Are they migrating, are they returning to the same box or same area of the county, 2020 Kestrel Box Occupancy Occupied by Number of boxes Occupancy Rate Kestrels 54 69% Starlings 17 22% Squirrels 2 2% Empty 5 6% Kestrels just fledged on August 28 in Highland County. 4. Are they traveling over the mountains to nest in other boxes placed in the Shenandoah Valley or elsewhere? Banding is very valuable in the 21st century because “catch, release, catch again” can permit estimates of two key demographic parameters: survival and recruitment.



Great Egret – Silver Lake – Sept 2020

Photo Credit: Steve White



Philadelphia Vireo – Harrisonburg yard – Sept 2020

Photo Credit: Diane Lepkowski



Yellow-billed Cuckoo – Paul State Forest – Sept 2020

Photo Credit: Diane Lepkowski



Hillandale Birders September 2020

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: VACANT

TREASURER: Audrey Shenk

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Kathy Fovargue, Martha Faw

GOLDFINCH GAZETTE – Denise Hoodock

EMAIL: info@rockinghambirdclub.com



Rockingham Bird Club

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