



# Goldfinch Gazette

## The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

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May 2021

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### VIRTUAL CLUB MEETING via ZOOM

**DATE:** Thursday, May 6, 2021

**TIME:** 7:00 PM

**PLACE:** VIRTUAL via ZOOM

**PROGRAM:** Election of officers for next year

This should be a short meeting, please be prompt! We are asking everyone who can Zoom in, please do so we have a quorum for the elections. This is our last meeting for the 2020-2021 program year. There will be no meetings in June, July, or August. The plan is to return in September 2021 with programs. We are working with VMRC to see if our regular venue will be available in September.

The Slate is as follows:

One-year terms:

President	Debbie Harrison
VP – Programs	Robyn Puffenbarger
VP – Field trips	Diane Lepkowski
Secretary (Position currently vacant)	Stephani Moore
Treasurer	Audrey Shenk

Two-year terms (with 1 successive term allowed):

2 Members-at-Large Our current Members-at-Large are:

Kathy Fovarge, thru June 2021	Kathy Fovarge
Martha Faw, thru June 2022 (her last year)	Martha Faw

Join us via Zoom:

<https://bridgewatercollege.zoom.us/j/92876403497?pwd=aVIWAlArTWJoOllpYXQ1Ok1BUGxSZz09>

Meeting ID: **928 7640 3497**

Passcode: **827003**

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,92876403497#,,,\*827003# US (Chicago)

+19294362866,,92876403497#,,,\*827003# US (New York)

## FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski*

**\*\*Field trips have been postponed due to concerns regarding the pandemic.**

### BIRD SIGHTINGS

Herb Myers heard a **Wood Duck** along Cub Run and spotted a **Chipping Sparrow** on a walk in Keezletown on March 25.

Mike Smith reported 12 **Pine Warblers**, **Blue-headed Vireo**, and **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** on a hike at Runkles Gap on Massanutten Mtn on March 29. Mike had a yard **Fox Sparrow** on March 30 and **Louisiana Waterthrush**, **Brown Thrasher**, **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, **Pine Warbler**, **Blue-headed Vireo**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, and **Chipping Sparrow** at his place in Elkton on March 31.

Mike and Evelyn Shank had 10 **Evening Grosbeaks** at their feeder west of Bridgewater on March 30. The grosbeaks have continued, with 12 reported on April 20 there, and a large flock continuing nearby at Karen Shank & family's place in Spring Creek as of this writing.

Mike Smith reported two **Double-crested Cormorants** on the Shenandoah River at Elkton on April 5.

Matt Gingerich reported a **Golden Eagle** at his place in Linville on April 5. The following day, Matt had **Vesper Sparrows**, **Grasshopper Sparrow**, **Savannah Sparrow**, and **Northern Harrier** at his place.

Greg Moyers reported a **Black-and-white Warbler** at Madison Run Fire Rd on April 6 and a **Black-throated Green Warbler** at Switzer Dam on April 7. Greg reported a **Common Loon** at Switzer on April 11 and a **Hooded Warbler** on a trail along Rt. 33 on the same date.

Herb Myers had all seven local woodpecker species at Starry Meadows near Singers Glen on April 9 – **Downy**, **Hairy**, **Red-bellied**, **Red-headed**, **Northern Flicker**, **Pileated**, and **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**. On April 10, Herb reported **Louisiana Waterthrush**, **Pine Warbler**, and **Blue-headed Vireo** at Madison Run Fire Rd. On April 15, Herb reported a **Broad-winged Hawk** near Hensley's Pond on Massanutten Mtn. Herb had **Northern Parula**, **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, and **Louisiana Waterthrush** at Lower Highland west of Broadway on April 17.

Greg Moyers, Diane Lepkowski, and William Leigh reported **Blackburnian Warbler**, **Northern Parula**, and **Ovenbird** at Switzer Dam on April 17.

Mike Smith heard a **Northern Bobwhite** calling and saw **Blue-winged Teal**, **Solitary Sandpiper**, **American Pipit**, and **Eastern Meadowlark** at Leonard's Pond on April 20.

Diane Lepkowski reported two **Palm Warblers**, **Bonaparte's Gull**, and **Solitary Sandpipers** at Lake Shenandoah, and a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** at her home on April 21.

Doug and Sally Ruby had a **Red-headed Woodpecker** at their home on April 24. Diane Holsinger also had **Red-headed Woodpeckers** at her place in Timberville on the same date.

Greg Moyers reported **Great Crested Flycatcher**, **Red-eyed Vireo**, **Wood Thrush**, **Hermit Thrush**, **Red-headed Woodpecker**, **Purple Finch**, and **Palm Warbler** at Paul State Forest and a **Sora** at Nazarene Church Rd Wetland on April 24.

Matt Gingerich reported a female **Black Scoter** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on April 24. The **Eared Grebe** at the treatment plant continues to be seen and has now molted into breeding plumage.

Ken Ranck had a "yard" **Bald Eagle** at his place in Mt. Crawford on April 25 and has been seeing an **Osprey** along North River.

# Congratulations ZIG!

Our very own RBC member, Dr. Charles “Zig” Ziegenfus, was recognized with a newly-established award, the “2021 Valley Treasure,” by the Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley. A Valley Treasure is an “outstanding community member that has done more than their fair share to preserve the things we love about the Shenandoah Valley, and multiple folks reached out to let us know Professor Zig fit the bill. In addition to his professional work teaching field ornithology at JMU, Professor Zig has spent decades researching, banding, and tracking migrations and populations of Dark-eyed Juncos, Bluebirds, and White-crowned Sparrows, to name a few. In partnership with Clair Mellinger from EMU at Highland Retreat, he has monitored the migration of the Northern Saw-whet Owl for twenty years. Recently Professor Zig had setup several boxes for American kestrels in eastern Rockingham County and has engaged landowners up and down the Valley to host bird boxes and help with monitoring on their property.”

The award presentation was held remotely, via Zoom. It was beautifully done, and included video interviews with people whose lives Zig has touched. Attendees included many of Zig’s former JMU students, some of whom shared how Zig inspired them to pursue careers in ornithology and conservation. Congratulations Zig!





Evening Grosbeak, showing greenish  
breeding-season bill color

Photo: Diane Lepkowski

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Outreach Opportunity at FloydFest – Linda Cory, Roanoke Valley Bird Club**

I'm sending this out to birdwatchers that may be interested in leading bird walks in exchange for 5-day FloydFest (<https://floydfest.com/>) passes. I have led these walks for the last 4 years and need a replacement. They request to have two leaders to lead 1-hour walks on the FloydFest site at 8:00 AM on July 22nd, 23rd and 24th. There are ample warblers, vireos, woodpeckers and the usual Scarlet Tanagers, Indigo Buntings and Eastern Towhees to wow the newbie-birders. In the past, I have received 5-day passes for myself and a co-leader and a tent tag with one onsite parking permit, so I am assuming that will be the same arrangement for this year. If you are interested, please email me at [RVBC2015@outlook.com](mailto:RVBC2015@outlook.com) as soon as you can. Please pass this along to anyone birder that you feel would be interested. Thank you, Linda Cory, Roanoke Valley Bird Club, 540-580-5214.

### **Gift to the Rockingham Bird Club – Audrey Shenk, Treasurer**

At the end of March, the RBC received a donation from Sharon Shuler of Columbia, SC. Her aunt, Phyllis Southard Tutwiler, of Harrisonburg, Virginia, recently passed away at the age of 87. Sharon said that “the highlight of Phyllis’ day was feeding the many beautiful birds in her backyard. Aunt Phyllis loved birds!” Sharon and her brother and sisters made this donation to the Rockingham Bird Club in her memory. Thank you to Sharon and her siblings, Robert Freedman, Vicki Freedman, Cindy Howard, and Patti Hollingsworth for their generous donation in memory of their aunt.

### **9th Annual Raptorthon – Victor Laubach, Coordinator: Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch, Augusta Bird Club**

On May 10, our *Rockfish Gap Hawk Watchers* team will conduct our 9th annual Raptorthon! Our team of 5 this year (Vic Laubach, Penny Warren, Rich Wood, Ezra Staengl, and Baxter Beamer) will venture out to spend the day in Highland County, Virginia. Highland County is quite beautiful and

surely has more sheep than people! We did our 2018 Raptorthon here and had a blast, ending with 122 species including 7 raptor species! We aim to break our record this year! We plan to be up before sunrise looking for Whip-poor-wills and owls before spending the day covering as much of the county as possible. We'll likely be out until sunset!

We hope you can sponsor our team with a donation of any size! This is our only fund-raising drive of the year. Half of the funds we raise will support HMANA programs such as Hawk Watch Fund grants, and half will support our local Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch in Waynesboro, VA. We are an all-volunteer hawk watch that has been counting migrating fall raptors since 1976! We depend on donations like yours to help keep our hawk watch up-and-running year-after-year. After our Raptorthon, we will post a full summary of our day.

Please consider sponsoring our efforts. We're very grateful to those that have supported us in past years and hope you can do so again this year. It's easy to donate! Simply visit our Raptorthon page (<https://www.hmana.org/event/rockfish-gap-raptorthon-2021-2/>) and then click on the donate link when ready. To donate by mail, write a check to 'HMANA' and mail it to: Vic Laubach, 104 Lanchester Ct, Waynesboro, VA 22980. We'd really appreciate your help! Thanks, and wish us luck!



Black Scoter

Photo: Diane Lepkowski

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**PRESIDENT:** Debbie Harrison  
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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](mailto:info@rockinghambirdclub.com)



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