



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLVII

Number 2

Oct 2021

VIRTUAL CLUB MEETINGS, via ZOOM, WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE THE PLACE OF IN-PERSON CLUB MEETINGS, AT LEAST FOR THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE.

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, 2021, 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 7, 2021

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: VIRTUAL via ZOOM

PROGRAM: Setting the Record: The Virginia Big Year with Wes Teets

How many birds can one person see in Virginia in one calendar year? In 2020, Wes Teets set a new record. Learn about the journey from Wes with his strategies, experiences, and challenges. Wes has lived in Virginia all his life with 15 years in Northern Virginia, 12 in the Roanoke Valley, and 6 in the Richmond area. He received his bachelor’s from Longwood University, and his Master's from VCU, where he currently works. He has been birding seriously for over 13 years and is currently the field trips chair for the Richmond Audubon Society.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://bridgewatercollege.zoom.us/j/99505358573?pwd=V1hGdWdLRXFTRjQvT0luRUZ3dUtsZz09>

Meeting ID: 995 0535 8573

Passcode: 276008

One tap mobile:

+13126266799,,99505358573#,,,,*276008# US (Chicago)

+19294362866,,99505358573#,,,,*276008# US (New York)

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Robyn Puffenbarger at rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu or 540-908-7335.

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

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

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Cory Taylor reported six **Black-bellied Plovers** at Turner Sod Farm on Captain Yancey Rd on Aug. 18. Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski reported one **Black-bellied Plover**, as well as a **Semipalmated Plover**, at the same location on Aug. 22. Greg and Diane found a **Baird's Sandpiper** at this location on Aug. 29 and again on Sept. 6.

We had several reports of **Common Nighthawks** migrating through the area. Mike and Evelyn Shank saw a flock of around 50 at Spring Creek on Aug. 21, Mike Smith reported one flying over the soccer field at Sentara Park in Harrisonburg on Aug. 26, Herb Myers reported around 70 at his place near Keezletown on Aug. 29, Ken Dubel reported four at Elkton on the same date, and Sharon and Jay Landis reported seven at Singers Glen on Sept. 14.

The Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant was very productive for shorebirds in late August and early September. Matt Gingerich and Cory Taylor reported a **Baird's Sandpiper** on Aug. 23. William Leigh reported two the following day, and Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski had four on Aug. 25. Baird's were reported as late as Sept. 15. William and Huck Hutchens reported a **Sanderling** on Aug. 27, William reported a **Ruddy Turnstone** and two **Sanderlings** on Sept. 1. Greg Moyers counted five **Sanderlings** on Sept. 1. William reported a **Forster's Tern** on Sept. 1. A **Semipalmated Plover** was reported on Sept. 15.

Matt Gingerich found a **Lark Sparrow** along Piney Woods Rd south of New Market on Aug. 25.

Huck Hutchens reported a pair of **Short-billed Dowitchers** at Leonard's Pond on Aug. 27.

The fields surrounding the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction on Lumber Mill Rd have been very productive over the past month. Cory Taylor found an **American Golden-Plover** on Aug. 27 and Matt Gingerich reported a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** later the same day. **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were consistently reported through Sept. 12, with a high of eight birds reported by Greg Moyers on Aug. 30. **American Golden-Plovers** were reported sporadically through mid-September but in numbers much lower than recent years. Perhaps the best finds here were **Upland Sandpipers**. Andrew Elgin identified the first on Aug. 29 and Doug Ruby reported one on Sept. 11. Six **Short-billed Dowitchers**

were reported on Sept. 1 and as many as four **Baird's Sandpipers** were reported between Aug. 29 and Sept. 13. **Pectoral, Least, and Semipalmated Sandpipers** were also reported throughout the period.

Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski spotted a **Peregrine Falcon** on W. Dry River Rd on Sept. 11. Diane later saw the falcon flying away with a dove in its talons and another dove in hot pursuit.

Joe and Ruth Shank watched five **Bald Eagles** feeding on a groundhog in a field beside their place near Dayton on Sept. 4.

Matt Gingerich found a **Connecticut Warbler** and a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** at Switzer Dam on Sept. 9. Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski reported a **Connecticut Warbler** at the same location on Sept. 11. William Leigh refound the bird later that day. Greg and Diane also reported a **Connecticut Warbler** here on Sept. 19.

Herb Myers reported eight **Wild Turkeys** at Highland Retreat west of Broadway on Sept. 11.

Ken and Mildred Ranck reported thousands of **Tree Swallows** roosting in a cornfield near their place in Mt. Crawford in mid-September.

Diane Lepkowski had a **Magnolia Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, and American Redstart** at her yard water feature near Harrisonburg on Sept. 20. That evening, Diane heard an **Eastern Screech-Owl** calling. A few days later, near dusk on Sept. 23, Diane was able to get several nice shots of a red-morph **Eastern Screech-Owl** sitting on a window ledge as it staked out nearby feeders. On Sept. 25, Diane reported another American Redstart, along with a **Black-throated Green** and a **Tennessee Warbler**.

Mike Smith had a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** at his place near Elkton on Sept. 20.

Matt Gingerich reported a large gathering of swallows at the intersection of Brenneman Church Rd and Grist Mill Rd on Sept. 20. The group contained **Cliff Swallows** as well as a bird Matt thought may have been a **Cave Swallow**. Matt was unable to confirm the ID as the swallows had departed by the time he returned with a scope.

Dave Wendelken reported 130 **Broad-winged Hawks** flying over his place near Harrisonburg in a ten-minute span on Sept. 22.

Greg Moyers reported a **Connecticut Warbler** and a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Paul State Forest on Sept. 25. Greg reported a **Lincoln's Sparrow** at Hone Quarry on Sept. 26 and flushed a group of 10-12 **Ruffed Grouse** at FR 539 off the Flagpole Knob Rd on Shenandoah Mtn on the same date.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RBC Audit Volunteers Needed (2nd request)

If you can pay your own bills and balance a checkbook, this opportunity is for you! Our Club Bylaws (Article III, Section 5) state “. . . The club account shall be presented for audit once each year.”

We need a couple of non-Board Members to review our Treasurer's records for 7/1/2020 thru 6/30/2021. Please contact Treasurer, Audrey Shenk (ajshenk@gmail.com) or President, Debbie Harrison (woodshar@aol.com) ASAP. This is a one-time commitment.

Bluebird Box Monitoring Results

A team from the Rockingham Bird Club monitors 10 Bluebird boxes at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds from April through August each year. This year 28 Bluebirds and 11 Tree Swallows fledged. Of the 4 boxes at Debbie Harrison's trail, she reported 5 bluebird nests & 2 tree swallow nests, where 20 bluebirds fledged, but zero tree swallows this year, probably due to cold in May and possible predation.

Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch Open House

The Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch Open House was Saturday, September 18th. The Rockingham Bird Club had a table, as did several other groups. The Wildlife Center of Virginia gave educational presentations featuring two of their ambassador birds: a Red-tailed Hawk and an American Kestrel. The weather was perfect, and the only disappointment was that the anticipated Broad-winged Hawk migration did not show up in large numbers until Sunday! Thanks to Robyn Puffenbarger, our club table had great appeal, with the raptor skins from Bridgewater College drawing interest and questions from children and adults alike; Robyn thought around 100 attendees visited. Vic Laubach, the watch coordinator, estimated 150 guests attended the event. (See photos on page 7.)

Bird Seed Sale News

A BIG Thank You to everyone that ordered seed this year. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Remember that **Saturday, Nov 13, 9:00 am-1:00 pm is our Pick-up Day.**

We will have curbside service at the Poultry Barn at the Rockingham Fairgrounds. Follow the "Event" signs. You will enter at Gate 5 and exit through Gate 4.

Please contact Kathy Byers if you are interested in helping that day.

kkbyers77@gmail.com. 540-820-6517

Information for helpers will be sent out around Nov 1.



Charles "Zig" Ziegenfus, ready to ride in style to the Dolly Sods banding station! No, he did not make the full trip to WV from Harrisonburg in this buggy, but this creatively designed "**Zig Rig**" was built this year to transport our most honored, expert bander across rocky, uneven terrain to the banding station/ nets for his continuing volunteer work at the site. The rig is powered by a two horse (human)-powered engine (one steering at the front, another pushing at the rear.)

September 2021



Eastern Screech-Owl – Yard bird near Harrisonburg, on 9/23/21

Photo credit: Diane Lepkowski



Dr. Robyn Puffenbarger, representing the Rockingham Bird Club, at Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch Open House, Saturday September 18th, 2021.



Wildlife Center of Virginia presented two of their ambassador birds, American Kestrel (left) and Red-tailed Hawk (right) at the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch Open House, Saturday September 18th, 2021

Rockingham Bird Club
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PRESIDENT: Debbie Harrison
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VICE PRESIDENT: PROGRAMS – Robyn Puffenbarger

VICE PRESIDENT: FIELD TRIPS – Diane Lepkowski

SECRETARY: Stephani Moore

TREASURER: Audrey Shenk

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Kathy Fovargue, Martha Faw

GOLDFINCH GAZETTE – Denise Hoodock

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