



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

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**Dec 2021**

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

**VIRTUAL CLUB MEETING via ZOOM**

**DATE:** Thursday, December 2, 2021

**TIME:** 7:00 PM

**PLACE:** VIRTUAL via ZOOM

**PROGRAM:** "Chile for Thanksgiving" with Robyn Puffenbarger

In 2018, Robyn Puffenbarger traveled with her husband Bill Benish and dear friend Lucie Fritz to Chile for Thanksgiving. In this first trip to South America and besides sightseeing, Robyn and Bill planned three day trips with Birdwatching Chile and Rodrigo Reyes. More guides will do day trips, so international travel, even for work or with non-birders, can incorporate a chance to enjoy the natural world and bird watching. This travelogue will take us from sea level to high elevations, from sunny beaches with penguins to the cool Andes with a condor! Robyn has a B.S. in biology from Virginia Tech, and a Ph.D. at the Medical College of Virginia. She is a professor in the Department of Biology and Environmental Science and teaches ornithology some spring semesters as an elective. She enjoys gardening and volunteering as a Virginia Cooperative Extension certified master gardener.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://bridgewatercollege.zoom.us/j/99703978582?pwd=S254ZElHclhrR2tEblhYdW1rdWZlZz09>

**Meeting ID:** 997 0397 8582

**Passcode:** 966379

One tap mobile

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+13017158592,,99703978582#,,, \*966379# US (Washington DC)

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Robyn Puffenbarger at [rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu](mailto: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**

Julia Wenger saw and heard a **Long-eared Owl** on a family farm near Bridgewater from Sept. 19-22. Karen Shank also heard the owl during this span, and again about a week and a half later.

Herb Myers reported a **Lincoln's Sparrow** and a **Blue-Headed Vireo** in Keezletown on Oct. 28.

Diane Holsinger's first **Dark-eyed Juncos** of the season arrived at her place in Timberville on Oct. 28, her first yard **Purple Finch** arrived on Nov. 22.

Mike Smith reported **Wood Ducks**, **American Black Ducks**, and a **Winter Wren** at the Merck swamp on Rt. 340 on Oct. 28 and had his first-of-season **Purple Finch** at his feeder east of Elkton on Oct. 29. The following day, Mike had a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** and two **Palm Warblers** at his place.

Cory Taylor reported a **Cattle Egret** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on Oct. 29. Several birders were able to see the bird throughout the day. On Nov. 1, Matt Gingerich found a **Cattle Egret** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond near Mt. Crawford.

Tom Lord had a very late **Scarlet Tanager** land on the ground five feet away from him at his daughter's home on Shen Lake Drive on Nov. 1. The VSO gold book lists only one other Nov. record for this species in the mountains and valleys region.

Matt Gingerich had three **Dunlins** and three **Bonaparte's Gulls** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on Nov. 2.

Bill Benish reported that he and Robyn Puffenbarger had their first-of-season **Purple Finch** at their new place in Verona on Nov. 12.

Mike Smith reported an exceptionally late **Swainson's Thrush** and an **Eastern Phoebe** at his place on Nov. 12.

Karen, Everette, and Annie Shank have had some great birds around their place in Spring Creek, including a **Dickcissel** on Nov. 12 and a late **Nashville Warbler** on Nov. 14.

While birding at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on Nov. 20, Matt Gingerich spotted a distant group of six **Sandhill Cranes** flying east through New Market Gap.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **Bird Seed Sale Update**

On Saturday, November 13, a fantastic crew of volunteers helped load birdseed for our purchasers. The new venue at the Rockingham Fairgrounds turned out to be an excellent option and is probably the start of a new tradition.

My heartfelt gratitude goes out to the following: Audrey Shenk, who makes all numerical and technical aspects of the sale look easy! Winona Scott, our sales rep at BFG who actually gave us the idea for using the fairgrounds on our distribution day. Tyronne and Heidi at the fairgrounds, for their help with the signs and the facilities. Our team of volunteers, Karen & Everette Shank, Ruth Shank, Judie Breeden, Art Fovargue, Tim Hullings, Kathy Kaeli and Debbie Harrison. Annie Shank, who somehow manages to make 200+ suet cakes while taking care of small children, makes homemade cookies for the volunteers, and is still willing to help for four hours on Pick-up Day! Joe and Ruth Shank who donated the cornmeal for the suet cakes. And finally, all the folks that supported the club by purchasing seed.

Thank you all so much,  
Kathy Byers

## **Christmas Bird Count**

Our Rockingham Christmas Bird Count is planned for Friday, December 17. Every CBC worldwide runs on one day within the window of dates annually from December 14 through January 5, so this slightly early date allows us flexibility in case we need to postpone due to weather. The CBC admins advise again this year that we should adhere to pandemic protocols. Social and family pods are the main groups which can safely ride in one car together. Accordingly, the number of field participants will most likely be small and limited.

Please reach out to CBC Compiler Bill Benish [wcbenish@gmail.com](mailto:wcbenish@gmail.com) or 540.908.7336 if you may be able to participate in the field or as a Feeder Watcher from your home if living within the circle area.

## **RBC Audit**

The Executive Committee thanks Ramona Bearor & Susan Beachy for stepping up to review our Treasurer's books & records. They have submitted an unqualified report for the fiscal year July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. They also included helpful comments and calculations, given that the entire period was part of the Covid-19 pandemic. They note that "Audrey Shenk is a dedicated Treasurer and keeps accurate records for RBC."

## **VSO's Outer Banks Field Trip, Feb 4-6, 2022**

Make plans to attend the VSO's Winter field trip at the Outer Banks of North Carolina February 4-6! The weekend's leaders include Bill Akers and Jerry Via, as well as VSO field trip co-chairs Lee Adams and Meredith Bell. We always have a great variety of birds—and often a few surprise species, too—no matter what the weather.

COVID GUIDELINES – VSO is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all participants. We encourage every participant to be vaccinated, if at all possible. By registering for this event, you agree to abide by all guidance provided by individual field trip leaders, the Comfort Inn, and local businesses. North Carolina’s guidelines are not the same as Virginia’s. For example, our host hotel encourages guests to wear masks but does not require them.

For more information and to register for this trip, visit <https://www.viriniabirds.org/vso-events/obx-field-trip-kfwn>



Cattle Egret – Oakwood Pond – November 2021

Photo credit: Matt Gingerich



Merlin – Augusta County – November 2021

Photo credit: Diane Lepkowski

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