



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

**Volume XLVII**

**Number 7**

**Mar 2022**

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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, March 3, 2022

**TIME:** 7:00 PM

**PLACE:** VIRTUAL via ZOOM

**PROGRAM:** “Colonial Nesting Waterbirds in the Hampton Roads: Reflections on birds, bridges, politics, journalism and environmental activism” by Dr. Sarah Karpanty

Dr. Karpanty is a Professor of Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Virginia Tech. She will speak to us about the history of colonial waterbirds nesting on the South Island of the Hampton Roads Bridge tunnel, their temporary re-homing to Fort Wool/Rip-Rap Island and barges, and what the future may hold. She will also emphasize the important role that bird conservation groups played in the successful interim resolution and hopefully will play in the successful long-term resolution. She has studied shorebirds on the Eastern Shore barrier islands since 2005 and can answer your questions about those topics as well.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://bridgewatercollege.zoom.us/j/98140656881?pwd=VGw2QUpyb3BWUDYwRFY3OGlYblI0Zz09>

**Meeting ID:** 981 4065 6881

**Passcode:** 375642

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,98140656881#,,, \*375642# US (Chicago)

+19294362866,,98140656881#,,, \*375642# US (New York)

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***

**Hillandale Monthly Walk, Thursday, March 10, with Tom Mizell:** Meet at the Children's Playground parking lot at 8:30 AM.

## **TRIP REPORTS**

**Hillandale Park Monthly Walk, Thursday, February 10, 2022– *Tom Mizell***

On a pleasant morning I drove out of my driveway enroute to Hillandale Park. It had been almost two years since we had our last RBC walk at Hillandale. Would I remember the way? I turned on my car radio and was surprised to hear a song from the 60s “Hello Stranger It Seems Like a Mighty Long Time.” Absolutely it had been a mighty long time in “bird years” since we had gathered at Hillandale Park. When I arrived at the park, I found a parking lot full and had to park on the grass. Lots of friendly conversation and smiles. A nice reunion moment as we gathered. Thirteen members of the club had gathered and had already seen some birds and were ready to walk the trails. Our wish list included Brown Creeper, Tree Sparrow, Screech Owl, Hermit Thrush and Northern Flicker. I was so happy that we were having a walk that I forgot to observe a moment for safety. Please remind me in March.

By 8:40 AM we were birding! The first sightings included Northern Cardinals, American Robins, Blue Jays, and Tufted Titmouse. Mourning Doves perched on the powerline near the “new steel” bridge. Since our last walk the log cabin has disappeared and a new bridge, part of a new paved bike trail, replaced the old wooden pedestrian bridge. We also picked up European Starlings and a Red-bellied Woodpecker was perched high on an Oak Tree. Towards the golf course we could hear a Carolina Wren singing. Kathy Byers spotted a Yellow-rumped Warbler in the wooded area to the left of the cabin site. We all enjoyed watching it flit about as warblers do. So, our warbler count for 2022 is one. By now we had 9 species.

We headed north where the trail parallels the golf course fence. Bill Call, a regular park visitor that often shares his sightings with us, joined the group and spotted a Red-tailed Hawk that was perched over the golf course catching the sun's rays. Common Grackles and a flock of Cedar Waxwings blitzed by in a group flyover. A Fish Crow called to the northeast. White-throated Sparrows were along the trail. As we drew near to the northwest pedestrian bridge, we found Carolina Chickadees and then before we got around to the shelters, we added White-breasted Nuthatch, Canada Geese, Turkey Vulture and Downy Woodpecker. Don Perkuchin spotted some Dark-eyed Juncos. Near the main shelter Kathy found a small yellow bird. It appeared stunned or perhaps it was simply playing possum and allowed itself to be picked up. Consulting our field guides it fit the description of the seldom seen Lessor Rubber Chicken. Certainly a surprise.

As we completed the northwest loop around 10 AM, we decided to walk the new paved biking trail. A Tree Sparrow had been seen on it recently. Up to this point we had tallied 20 species. Thanks to Kathy Byers and Randy Cline as they continued to lead the remaining birders. The

trail winds through a brushy area, parallels the golf course, and passes woodland and pastureland to the Elementary school. It opens quite a bit of new habitat to explore. They walked much of the new trail and added the following birds: Northern Flicker, Eastern Bluebirds, White-crowned Sparrow, Northern Mockingbird, and Black Vulture. The walk finished up about 11:20 AM. Other birds seen this morning included Coopers Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Hairy Woodpecker, House Finch, House Sparrow, Song Sparrow and Brown-headed Cowbird. Kathy added a Common Raven as she walked to the park. Total species count this day – 32.

It was great to see a lot of the regulars (people and birds) and some new folks too! It had been almost 2 years since we last enjoyed birding together. I look forward to seeing folks once again on Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup> in Hillandale Park. Please join us at 8:30 AM. Hope we will see some migrants in addition to the residents. We have great likelihood of adding to our 2022 Warbler list. Hope you can join us.

## BIRD SIGHTINGS

Herb Myers spotted three of the continuing **Lapland Longspurs** on old Bridgewater Rd in Mt. Crawford on Jan. 23 and, upon returning home, was alerted by his wife Sarah to a gray-phase **Eastern Screech Owl** in their owl box in Keezletown.

Bob Adamek watched a group of **Cackling Geese** fly in and land on Silver Lake on Jan. 26. Diane Holsinger and Matt Gingerich later counted an astounding 28 **Cackling Geese**! The **Cackling Geese** and continuing **Greater White-fronted Goose** continued to be seen through Feb. 5. Silver Lake has also hosted **Redhead, Northern Shovelers, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Bufflehead, Ring-billed Gull**, and around 90 **Gadwalls** in February.

Mike Smith has had a number of notable yard birds at his place near Elkton over the past month, including a **Hermit Thrush** at his bird bath, a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, and **Fox Sparrow** and **Purple Finches** at his feeder. On Feb. 6, Mike had a **Pileated Woodpecker** at his suet feeder for what he believes may be the first time in 50+ years of feeding! **Brown Creepers** have also been seen on the suet.

Matt Gingerich found an **American Tree Sparrow** along the Friendly City Trail between Hillandale Park and Bluestone Elementary School on Feb. 6. The bird continued to be seen for several days.

Doug Ruby reported four continuing **Short-eared Owls** on Grist Mill Rd on Feb. 13.

Herb Myers reported eight **Cackling Geese** and three **Common Mergansers** on Lake Shenandoah, and **Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads**, and **Gadwalls** at Lake Campbell on Feb. 15.

Mike Donaldson reported a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Wildwood Park in Bridgewater on Feb. 15.

Herb Myers reported a **Brown Thrasher** and a **Hermit Thrush** at Tangly Woods in Keezletown on Feb. 21.

Mike Smith had a **Hermit Thrush** and a **Purple Finch** on the Elk Run Trails behind the Elkton Community Center on Feb. 21.

Karen, Everette, and Annie Shank are among the lucky few to have had **Purple Finches** visit feeders this winter.

Will Vest and Dave Wendelken independently reported seeing **Bald Eagles** at Lake Shenandoah during the last week of Feb.

The Broadway Wastewater Plant continues to be a hotbed of waterfowl activity. Beginning in late January, **Tundra Swans** have been sporadically seen, often in good numbers. Diane Holsinger reported a **Horned Grebe** on Jan. 29. Derek and Laurie Yoder spotted what appeared to be a very early **Purple Martin** on Feb. 12. Sharon & Jay Landis reported a **Bald Eagle** over the weekend of Feb. 20-21. Other notable species include **Canvasbacks, Redheads, Common Goldeneyes, Northern Pintails, Cackling Geese, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Common and Hooded Mergansers, American Wigeons, and Bonaparte's, Herring, and Ring-billed Gulls**. Some of the more impressive waterfowl counts include **Northern Shovelers** (235) reported by Diane Holsinger on Feb. 1, **Tundra Swans** (20) reported by Diane Holsinger on Feb. 6, **Northern Pintails** (32) reported by Diane Holsinger on Feb. 16, **Cackling Geese** (19) reported by William Leigh on Feb. 18, **Redheads** (39) reported by Matt Gingerich on Feb. 19, and **Common Goldeneyes** (14) reported by Greg Moyers on Feb. 20.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### President's Message

As you know, any Club needs leaders! We skipped "in person" elections last 2 years due to COVID and I appreciate that the Officers and Members-at-large agreed to continue on. But the Club needs new leadership! All positions are OPEN! (The Executive Committee has always mentored the ones following them, if requested.) Job descriptions can be found on our website in ROCKINGHAM BIRD CLUB BY-LAWS, ARTICLE III (Duties of Officers).

The following is directly from our bylaws:

#### ARTICLE VI (Annual Elections)

Section 1. At the March club meeting, the Executive Committee will name a Nominating Committee of three members. The immediate past President will be the Chairman of the Nominating Committee. It will be the duty of the Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of one nominee for each office described in Article IV, Section 1 of the Constitution, plus two members – at – large. This committee shall present a report to the membership at the May meeting. Nominees will be selected from the roster of members in good standing.

Please help by volunteering to be on the Nominations Committee:

1. Debbie Harrison, chair
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Generally, members of the Nominations Committee do NOT run for office.

**Please indicate your willingness to serve as:**

One-year terms:

President

First Vice President – Programs

Second Vice President – Field trips

Secretary

Treasurer

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

2 Members-at-Large

(Our current Members-at-Large are Kathy Fovarge & Martha Faw.)

Kathy’s term ends 6/2023.

Martha’s term ends 6/2022 but, if elected, she can serve in the same capacity next year.

<b>ROCKINGHAM BIRD CLUB</b>	
<b>Executive Committee (3 meeting per year):</b>	<b>Executive Committee (per Constitution) FYI 7/1/2021-6/30/2022</b>
<b><i>elected annually:</i></b>	
<b>President</b>	<b>Debbie Harrison</b>
<b>First Vice President (Programs)</b>	<b>Robyn Puffenbarger</b>
<b>Second Vice President (Field Trips)</b>	<b>Diane Lepkowski</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Stephani Moore</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Audrey Shenk</b>
<b><i>elected bi-annually, may serve 1 successive term:</i></b>	
<b>Member-at-Large (2-year terms) #1</b>	<b>Kathy Fovargue (6/30/23 ends first term)</b>
<b>Member-at-Large (2-year terms) #2</b>	<b>Martha Faw (6/30/22 ends first term)</b>
<b><i>Standing Committee Chairs:</i></b>	
<b>Club Historian</b>	<b>Art Fovargue</b>
<b>Christmas Bird Count</b>	<b>Bill Benish</b>
<b>Male Breeding Bird Census</b>	<i>Empty</i>
<b>Ways &amp; Means (fundraising)</b>	<b>Kathy Byers</b>
<b>Bird Records</b>	<i>Empty</i>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	<b>Denise Hoodock</b>
<b>Publications</b>	<i>Empty</i>
<b>Bluebird Monitoring</b>	<i>Empty</i>

### **Treasurer’s Report – Audrey Shenk**

At the latest RBC Executive Committee meeting in late January, the committee agreed to make donations to the following organizations using the proceeds from our annual Bird Seed Sale:

The Wildlife Center of Virginia (the organization that cares for sick or injured wildlife in our area), the American Bird Conservancy (conserving native birds and their habitats throughout the

Americas), the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory (protecting migrating birds), the Center for Conservation Biology at The College of William & Mary (preparing future ornithologists), the National Audubon Society in recognition of their support for our local Christmas Bird Count, Massanutten Regional Library, the Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia (promoting conservation of our local birds and their habitats), the Community Cloud Forest Conservation (working in Guatemala to alleviate poverty and protect the cloud forests where many of our local birds spend the winter), and the Virginia Society of Ornithology's *Breeding Bird Atlas 2*.

Thank you for your support of our annual fundraiser. By purchasing bird seed and volunteering on distribution day, you make these donations possible. Happy safe birding in 2022!

## **Do you like Bluebirds?**

The Rockingham Bird Club, with the help and support of the Rockingham County Fair Association, has established a 'Bluebird Trail' of nest boxes at the Rockingham Fair Grounds and there are more requests to establish & monitor more trails. Any Trail needs MONITORS to check the boxes on a weekly basis (April thru August) which takes about 1 hour.

People interested in volunteering **1 HOUR per MONTH**, will be joining a monitoring team (including mentoring) & given an orientation on nest box monitoring and the protocol used for collecting and reporting data. If you have a home nest box (or trail) that you monitor, you can register your trail as well.

**\*\*Our club Bluebird Trail needs a Trail leader AND monitors. Please consider volunteering and let Debbie Harrison know and get any questions answered: 540-856-3058, [woodshar@aol.com](mailto:woodshar@aol.com)**

Contact Charlene Talcott, State Coordinator: [vabluebirdscoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:vabluebirdscoordinator@gmail.com)

More info available at <https://www.viriniabluebirds.org/>

## **VSO Annual Meeting - 2022**

The Cape Henry Audubon Society and the Friends of Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge are making tentative plans to hold a modified VSO Annual Meeting and Dismal Swamp Birding Festival the weekend of April 29- May 1, 2022. Further details to come.

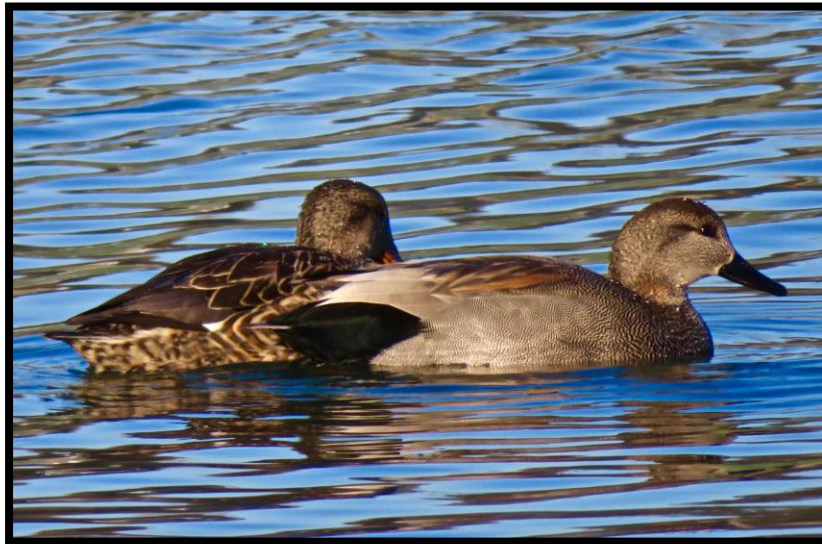
**Reminder:** You can view our club's constitution, by-laws, policies, and previous newsletters, on our website! Additionally, you can download the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of *The Birds of Rockingham County* and the VSO's *Principles of Birding Ethics*.





Kathy Byers and the “Lesser Yellow Chicken” she found on monthly Hillandale Walk – Feb 2022

Photo credit: Tom Mizell



Male and Female Gadwalls – Silver Lake – February 2022

Photo credit: Stephen White



Charles "Zig" Ziegenfus and American Kestrel – Raptor Banding

Photo credit: Alan Williams





Charles “Zig” Ziegenfus and Red-tailed Hawk – Raptor Banding  
Photo credit: Alan Williams

Rockingham Bird Club  
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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

**EMAIL:** [info@rockinghambirdclub.com](mailto:info@rockinghambirdclub.com)

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