



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLVII

Number 10

June 2022

NO CLUB MEETING WILL BE HELD IN JUNE

Have a great summer. See you in September!

FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski*

Hillandale Monthly Walk, Thursday, June 16, 2022, with Tom Mizell: Meet at the Children's Playground parking lot at 8:30 AM.

TRIP REPORTS

Paul State Forest, Monday, May 9– *Greg Moyers*

Eleven members of the RBC attended the walk at Paul State Forest on May 9. The weather was very pleasant, and we found a number of good birds. The first notable sighting happened before the walk even began. As the group gathered in the parking area, the sound of Bobolinks was heard from a nearby field. We eventually spotted a few Bobolinks perched at the top of a tree at the edge of the field.

As the group moved along the path, we spotted Baltimore Orioles, Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, Red-headed Woodpeckers, and Swainson's and Wood Thrushes. We had flyover views of a pair of Wood Ducks at the start of the walk, and a Bald Eagle at the end of the walk. Several species of warblers were seen and heard, including Cape May, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Black-and-white, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Ovenbird, Northern Parula, American Redstart, Chestnut-sided, and Common Yellowthroat.

Attendees who persevered all the way to the back of the forest and up the hill were rewarded with the bird of the day - a Yellow-breasted Chat, which we were alerted to by Diane Lepkowski, who had climbed the hill ahead of the rest of the group. This fun fellow provided nice views and vocals for all. We concluded the walk with around 50 species, 11 warblers, and the show-stealing former-warbler!

Hillandale Park Monthly Walk, Thursday, May 5 – *Tom Mizell*

Kathy Byers and Dave Wendelken were the first to arrive at the designated parking lot. They were both mildly surprised at what appeared to be a low turnout for the walk. But then folks started arriving right on time and we had a very nice size group of 16 to look for May Migrants. The group was

disappointed that Randy Cline would not be able to join us but were comforted in knowing he was on a birding trip in Ohio, the Lake Erie area. Kathy was so eager to start birding that she forgot to ask for "Wish List" birds until the group had started out. She was certain that some great birds would be seen, and everyone's inner wishes would be granted.

The first warbler seen was a Yellow-rumped Warbler, quickly followed by lovely views of an Indigo Bunting. As the group reached the trail along the golf course, activity quickly picked up. The advantages of birding with a group quickly became evident as folks started pointing and calling out what might be in the trees. Fortunately, the "A-Team" of RBC was on hand to find and identify the birds above.

Thank you again Kathy for welcoming everyone and getting the May walk underway! I arrived at Hillandale at 8:45 AM and the temperature was 58°. I noted that most of the trees seemed to be leafing out now, and all the daffodils of last month were no longer in their spring bloom. I gazed across the bike trail bridge and neither saw nor heard the group (I later counted 16 birders). When I got out of the car I heard a Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, and an American Robin. I saw some Common Grackles and a Northern Cardinal. Still in the parking lot I heard a significantly loud ROAR. I thought perhaps it was a warbler sighting, so I hurried to catch up. By the time I crossed the bridge I heard another ROAR. But it came from behind me. It erupted from the volleyball court from some enthusiastic early morning competition. Other sounds enroute to the RBC group was a train whistle at 8:59 and then church bells rang at 9:00.

I caught up with a group a little after 9 AM as they approached the small concrete slab on the trail leading towards the northwest corner. A Great Crested Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Carolina Wren, Wood Thrush, Eastern Towhee, Tufted Titmouse made the list and the group saw a Swainson's Thrush around 9:30. A Northern Waterthrush was sighted by Mike Donaldson along the stream channel near a concrete slab. The Waterthrush flew up into a nearby tree for full viewing. This thoughtful bird enabled all of us the opportunity to get very good looks. During the next 45 minutes we spent time between the slab and the northwest corner as the birding activity kept us looking up. Birds flew in and out. We added Ovenbird and Pileated Woodpecker. A real crowd pleaser was a Rose-breasted Grosbeak that flew over, briefly landed and then disappeared. A Common Yellowthroat moved along very stealthily in a cedar tree and for a moment it perched in clear view about 20 feet from the trail. The Warbler parade included more Yellow-rumped Warblers, Black-throated Green, Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, Cape May, Northern Parula, Palm, and Bay-breasted. This AAA-rated (Avian Active Area) was difficult to walk away from. Before I forget - did you see the Scarlet Tanager? Warbler neck was setting in, but we weren't done yet! We soon added Nashville Warbler and Barn Swallow. William Leigh spotted a Red-headed Woodpecker that flew over around 10:25 AM. Before crossing the pedestrian bridge, we added Red-eyed Vireo, White-breasted Nuthatch, Mallard, and Turkey Vulture. Other warblers included American Redstart and Black-throated Blue. An Eastern Kingbird surprised many of us in the Northwest corner.

Now as we drew near to the pedestrian bridge, we detected some flitting motion in the cedar tree next to the trail. We saw not one, not two, not three, but four Ruby-crowned Kinglets having breakfast. It was now about 10:30 AM. Throw in an American Crow and an unidentified raptor.

By 10:45 we were moving beyond the pedestrian bridge towards the shelter having seen a total of 14 warblers and the species list now about 40. As we approached the shelter, we found Swainson's Thrush again and Blue-headed Vireo in the cedars near the water fountain. To the north of the water fountain, we again saw the Orange Variant Scarlet Tanager that some had marveled at earlier.

By 11:00 AM, the original 17 in the group had dropped to 11. Some folks were in the process of leaving and some were checking out other special parts of the park. In the following hour Diane Lepkowski added a Least Flycatcher, Dan Perkuchin reported Fish Crow, Canada Goose, American Goldfinch, Northern Mockingbird, Pine Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, and a Brown Thrasher on the way to his car and David Wendelken added Coopers Hawk.

Before I left, six of us decided to look for a Screech Owl whose return had been reported. We checked the picnic table loop. On the walk from Shelter 12 we came across Blue-headed Vireo, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, Black-and-white Warbler, and we were treated with lovely views of a Bay-breasted Warbler. We did not see the Red Morph Screech this day, but one may be sure we will check again, maybe next time.,

There were enjoyable moments when the sightings were fast and furious this day. Perhaps because of that my notes were a bit sketchy on the order of the morning's sightings. Other birds recorded included Baltimore Oriole, Chimney Swift, Hairy Woodpecker, Carolina Chickadee, European Starling, White-throated Sparrow, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

By noon the walk concluded, and we totaled over 60 species! Thanks to all that joined us for a fun morning in May. Hope to see you in June!

BIRD SIGHTINGS

The Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU has been the biggest area hotspot for migrants over the past month. Jaclyn Tolchin reported a **White-eyed Vireo** and **Northern Waterthrush** on April 25, a **Lincoln's Sparrow** on April 26, a **Yellow-throated Warbler** on April 29, and a **Cerulean Warbler** on May 2. Jonathan Drescher-Lehman reported a **Blue-winged Warbler** on April 28. Matt Gingerich reported an **Orange-crowned Warbler** on April 29. Greg Moyers found a **Yellow-breasted Chat** on May 2. A **Black-billed Cuckoo** was found by a member of Diane Lepkowski's lifelong learning class on May 3. Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski found a **Wilson's Warbler** on the same date. A **Sedge Wren** was reported to eBird on May 7 and continued to be seen until May 9. Matt Gingerich, Jaclyn Tolchin, and Peter Norment reported an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** on May 9. Randy Cline reported a **Bay-breasted Warbler** on May 12.

Greg Moyers reported **Bobolinks** at Goods Mill Rd on April 26, a singing **Blue-winged Warbler** at Paul State Forest on April 28, and a singing **Kentucky Warbler** at Paul State Forest on April 30.

Herb Myers reported a few good birds at Highland Retreat on April 30, including **Yellow-throated Vireo**, **Orchard Oriole**, **Northern Parula**, and **Yellow Warbler**. Herb reported his first-of-year **Indigo Bunting** in Keezletown on May 1.

William Leigh reported a **Caspian Tern** and a **Semipalmated Plover**, among other shorebirds, at the Oakwood Drive farm pond near Mt. Crawford on May 1. William reported a **White-rumped Sandpiper** at the same location on May 5, and eight **Short-billed Dowitchers** on May 6. At least three **Stilt Sandpipers** were also present on May 6.

Sharon Landis reported **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, **Baltimore Oriole**, **Palm Warblers**, and **Red-headed Woodpeckers** at Starry Meadows near Singers Glen on May 2.

William Leigh reported three **Forster's Terns** and three **Ring-billed Gulls** at the Broadway Wastewater Plant on May 5.

Mike Smith has had a number of good yard birds at his place east of Elkton, including **Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Pine, and Black-throated Green Warblers, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Wood Thrush,** and nesting **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** and **White-breasted Nuthatches**.

Matt Gingerich and Jake Myers reported a **Mourning Warbler** and a **Black-billed Cuckoo** at Hillandale Park on May 6.

Cory Taylor reported a **Common Tern** and 19 **Forster's Terns** at the Broadway Wastewater Plant on May 6.

The Nazarene Church Rd Wetland has produced a few good shorebirds in the past month. William Leigh reported a **Semipalmated Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Solitary Sandpiper** on May 7. Greg Moyers reported a **Dunlin**, along with **Least** and **Spotted Sandpipers**, on May 15. **Bobolinks**, first reported by Karen Shank, occupied the field across the road from the wetland in early May.

Mike Smith reported a **Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Prairie Warbler** at Cub Run Rd on May 7. On May 8, Mike reported **Nashville, Magnolia, and Yellow Warblers, Northern Waterthrush, Warbling Vireo, Baltimore Oriole, and Bank Swallows** at Riverside Park in Elkton.

William Leigh reported a **Wilson's Warbler** at Hillandale Park on May 7.

Ken Ranck hosted both **Rose-breasted** and **Blue Grosbeaks** at his feeder in Mt. Crawford on May 8.

Matt Gingerich, Jaelyn Tolchin, and Peter Norment heard a **Chuck-Will's-Widow** calling near Westover Park on May 9. Along with the previously mentioned **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, these were the two biggest highlights of their bicycling Big Day, during which they recorded 101 bird species within the city limits of Harrisonburg.

Mike Smith reported a **Kentucky Warbler** and a **Yellow-throated Vireo**, among others, near the Swift Run Gap entrance to Shenandoah National Park on May 12. Mike heard an **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** calling along Ore Bank Rd on May 13. Mike had **Cerulean Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, and Acadian Flycatcher** at the Hensley Hollow Overlook and a **Canada Warbler** at the Baldface Mtn Overlook on Skyline Drive on May 15.

Jay Landis heard an **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** calling at Starry Meadows on May 16.

Mourning Warblers were reported at two locations at Paul State Forest on May 19. Will Vest and Mike Donaldson reported hearing one several hours apart near the picnic tables. Diane Lepkowski spotted this bird in the early afternoon. In between these reports, Greg Moyers photographed a **Mourning Warbler** at the first low area near the intermittent stream.

Diane Holsinger reported **Red-necked Phalaropes** at Leonard's Pond on May 19.

Herb Myers and his family members have found a number of active nests around their Tangly Woods property near Keezletown, including those of **Brown Thrasher, Eastern Phoebe, Northern Cardinal, Eastern Bluebird, and Wood Thrush**.

William Leigh reported three **Dunlins** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond on May 20. On May 21, Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski counted 11 **White-rumped Sandpipers** at the same location and that evening William Leigh reported 3 at Leonard's Pond; on May 25 William Leigh reported 16 at Oakwood.

A **Common Loon** was first reported May 23 at Lake Shenandoah by Diane Lepkowski and was still there as of May 26. This may be the same individual released around May 21 by the Wildlife Center, who report the bird had sustained what they believed were superficial injuries.

Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski photographed a soaring **Mississippi Kite** at Hopkins Gap Rd on May 26. Later that day, they found a singing **Mourning Warbler** at Slate Lick Fields.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT – *Debbie Harrison*

Elections were held at the May meeting, but no President was elected. The VP-Programs position was filled by Kathy Byers, and Member-at-large position was filled by Herb Myers, with other officers elected without opposition.

I will NOT serve again this coming year. I will continue on the Board as Past-President & the Club truly needs a President. We can hold a special election when a nominee is found. Vacancies on the staff of officers may be filled by appointment by the Executive Committee for the unexpired term only. The President needs to open & close the monthly meetings. Remember this is a friendly audience; no one is forced to be here! It [is] not really ‘public speaking’; it’s speaking to like-minded members.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my ~12 years in this organization! So many new friends AND new birds! After a couple years as “just a member”, I became Member-at-Large in July 2013 & President in July 2014. It is time for me to step down and give someone else the opportunity to serve others and grow personally and increase your personal enrichment. Generosity is good for the Club and good for each of us too!

Virginia Society of Ornithology ROYAL RAFFLE

Win an incredible opportunity for a banding-day adventure at the Royal Tern Breeding Colony at Fort Wool in Hampton Virginia, a site normally closed to the public! This is an incredibly unique and exciting opportunity for the raffle winner as the Fort Wool habitat complex is normally closed to the public in order to protect the breeding birds. Adding to the excitement, the visit will occur on the day that the colony’s chicks are being banded, and you will have an opportunity to participate in all aspects of that activity!

Your Entry Will Support Bird Conservation - All funds raised from this raffle will support completion of the [Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas](#), an educational website that will report the current status and distribution of Virginia’s 200 breeding birds and will help inform bird conservation in Virginia and beyond.

Grand Prize - One winner and their guest will spend an exciting day with Virginia Tech’s Shorebird Program and the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), who will be banding Royal and Sandwich Tern chicks on Fort Wool in Hampton, Virginia. Located directly adjacent to the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel (HRBT), Fort Wool is a state and national historic site that was transformed in 2020 into a temporary nesting site for breeding seabirds displaced by the HRBT expansion project as part of a [ground-breaking conservation success story](#) by the DWR and Virginia Department of Transportation.

Trip Date – TBD: The anticipated timeframe is early July, most likely occurring sometime during July 1-10, including the potential for it to occur on July 4. The date will be determined in late May/early June.

What this Day Includes:

- Observe first-hand the spectacle of Virginia's largest Royal and Sandwich Tern colony that nests on Fort Wool, as well as the numerous Common and Gull-billed Terns and Black Skimmers that nest on the three industrial barges that complete the habitat complex.
- See and have an opportunity to assist with the Royal and Sandwich Tern chick round-up by helping to bring chicks to banders and returning banded young to their parents and cohorts on-site.
- Observe banders in action, help record data, and even band a chick or two under the careful supervision of a bander.
- The day will start early, just before sunrise, on Fort Monroe where you will board a small boat that will take you out to Fort Wool. A safety briefing will occur beforehand.

Eligibility - Minimum age for both the winner and their guest is 18.

Drawing - Will be held the week of June 6. The winner will have **24 hours to accept** before a runner-up is drawn.

If selected as the winner, the individual and their guest must agree to:

- *Be prepared to spend up to 6 hours on Ft Wool. Drinks, snacks and shade will be provided, but bring sunscreen, a sun hat, and your own water and preferred snacks. Wear lightweight, comfortable clothing that you don't mind getting slightly covered in bird poop, and shoes that allow you to walk easily on sand.*
- *Feel comfortable riding in a small boat for approximately a 15 minute ride in potentially heavy swells. Both individuals must be able to board and exit the boat without difficulty and climb up and down a short dock ladder.*
- *Follow the direction and safety protocols of the DWR during the event.*
- *Sign the DWR standard liability release waiver prior to their visit to Fort Wool.*
- *Remember: Winner will have 24 hours to accept the win before a runner-up is drawn.*

How to Enter: Buy your raffle tickets on the Virginia Society of Ornithology website <https://www.virginiabirds.org/royal-raffle>

- Ticket prices: 1 for \$12, 5 for \$50, 15 for \$75. Multiple blocks of each price group can be ordered.
- Sales will close at 11:59 pm on Friday June 3, 2022.

Want to support the Rockingham Bird Club while you shop?

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's absolutely FREE to you and does not increase the cost of what you buy in any way.



Green Heron – Lake Shenandoah

Photo credit: Art Fovargue



Mississippi Kite - Hopkins Gap Rd

Photo credit: Diane Lepkowski

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: Stephani Moore

TREASURER: Audrey Shenk

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Kathy Fovargue, Martha Faw

GOLDFINCH GAZETTE – Denise Hoodock

EMAIL: info@rockinghambirdclub.com

ON THE WEB: <https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

