



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLVIII

Number 1

Sept 2022

Welcome Back!!

CHANGE TO MEETING DAYS & LOCATION

We are so pleased to announce the return of in-person meetings for our club! Your continued support during the last two and a half years is greatly appreciated.

Please note that club meetings will now be held on the **2nd Thursday** of each month, except for the December meeting, which will be on Wednesday, Dec 7.

Our club meeting place has also changed. We think you will love our new space in the Fellowship Hall at **Park View Mennonite Church**, 1600 College Ave, Harrisonburg VA, 22802 The church is easily accessed from College Ave or Park Rd.

Directions from Downtown Harrisonburg:

Take VA-42 North to Mt Clinton Pike, Turn Left (West) on Mt Clinton Pike, Turn Right (North) on Park Rd and drive through the EMU campus and past Shank Dr. The church will be on your left.

Directions from VMRC:

Come through the main entrance, quickly Turn Right on Heritage Dr, Turn Left on Shank Dr, Turn Right on Park Rd. The church will be on your left

SEPTEMBER MEETING

DATE: Thursday, September 8, 2022

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: Park View Mennonite Church, Fellowship Hall

PROGRAM: “Northern Bobwhite Recovery Initiative” with Tiffany Beachy

The Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) is often referred to as an “edge” species, seeking habitat where crop fields intersect with woodlands, pastures, and old fields. Historically, land use favored Bobwhite, but changes in land use and how lands are managed have caused the bird’s numbers to dip by more than 80 percent over the last 60 years. Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) offers technical and financial assistance to help landowners manage for early successional habitat. This assistance helps producers plan and implement a variety of conservation activities, or practices, that benefit the Bobwhite and many other game and non-game species.

Tiffany Beachy is a Private Lands Wildlife Biologist based in Verona. She writes early successional habitat management plans and provides technical assistance for private landowners interested in managing their lands for wildlife. Before her current position, Tiffany worked for an environmental learning center inside Great Smoky Mountains National Park and as the Golden-Winged Warbler Partner Biologist in West Virginia.

FIELD TRIPS - Diane Lepkowski

Hillandale EXTRA BONUS WALK, Friday September 9, with Greg Movers: Meet at the parking lot in front of the children's playground at 8:30 AM. September is prime time for fall migrants and Hillandale is a great location to find them, so we'll be visiting the park twice this month. We'll do our best to catch earlier migrants on this walk, then be sure to attend Tom Mizell's monthly walk on the 22nd to catch the later wave of migrants. If you wish to be notified in case of a weather-related cancellation, you may email Greg at gwmoyers@msn.com. Otherwise, just show up!

Where the Raptors Soar! A Day at the Hawk Watch, Saturday, September 17, 10 AM – 3 PM: The 10th Annual Open House of the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch will take place at the Inn at Afton, 185 Afton Circle, Afton, VA. This is a fun day of family events, including a Wildlife Center of VA live animal show at 11 AM and 1 PM, Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary exhibit, Master Naturalist programs and other exhibits! *It's also near or at peak Broad-winged Hawk migration, with the potential for THOUSANDS of hawks passing through!* Enjoy refreshments from the grill. Bring your own drinks and binoculars. Rain cancels the event. Directions can be located at www.rockfishgaphawkwatch.org/directions

Hillandale Monthly Walk, Thursday, September 22, with Tom Mizell: Meet at the Main shelter parking lot at 8:30 AM. Questions? Contact Tom - ztomvaz@cs.com 540-810-5898 or Kathy - kkbyers77@gmail.com 540-820-6517

TRIP REPORTS

Hillandale Park Monthly Walk, Thursday, August 18 – Tom Mizell

On Thursday, August 18, fifteen members of the Rockingham Bird club gathered in front of the shelter in Hillandale Park. It was in the 60s and sunny and a very pleasant morning. Wishlist birds for the day included Pileated Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Fall Warbler, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Roseate Spoonbill.

Kathy Byers welcomed folks and shared announcements concerning the club's new meeting place and date at Park View Mennonite Church second Thursdays, and upcoming bird seed sales. While we gathered and were leaving the parking lot, the first birds to answer the roll call were American Crow, Mourning Dove, Blue Jay, Carolina Wren, Northern Cardinal, and American Robin. We headed towards the northwest corner and added Downy Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Gray Catbird.

Around 9 o'clock and just downstream of the pedestrian bridge things got enjoyably busy. Great Crested Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo and Carolina Chickadee were sighted. Greg Moyers got everyone's attention when he spotted a Cerulean Warbler in a Walnut Tree along the stream. In the next 10 or so minutes we had a Black-and-white Warbler and an American Redstart. I believe everyone got to see at least one warbler during this flurry. It was challenging to find the Warblers as several Titmice and Chickadees flitted about relentlessly as if to impersonate warblers. The birds in the canopy were rather actively feeding. I enjoyed hearing people telling others how to find the Cerulean Warbler, telling others what branch it was on, how high in the tree and so forth amidst all that fluttering. A few examples: "Try to stay on it". The reply "Well, it moved!" When I was trying to find the Black-and-white Warbler, Bill Benish told me "It's to the right of Moon". One of the best directions of this day! A half-moon presented itself well this morning. I wish I could have gotten a photo of the Warbler and the Moon. By the time I got the camera ready the Warbler was well away from the Moon. Another time perhaps.....

As we moved counterclockwise along the trail we added Eastern Wood-Pewee and Pileated Woodpecker. We think there may have been at least three Pileated Woodpeckers. We got some pretty good looks at Pileated Woodpeckers as they worked their way upward in their distinct movements. A flock of Red-winged Blackbirds flew overhead pushing our total species to 19. Several folks tried to identify a buteo as it flew over the golf course. As we were approaching the fork in the trail (west of the old log cabin site), Linda Miller spotted a Northern Flicker in the top of one of the numerous dead Ash trees. As we headed south from the fork in the trail to the bike trail both Black and Turkey Vultures flapped and glided overhead. In this short stretch we also had Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. We added House Finch, and Mike Donaldson spotted a Northern Parula warbler. A few Chimney Swifts demonstrated their rapid wingbeats and House Sparrows made sure they were seen.

It was 10 o'clock and we headed towards the high school on the new bike trail. We picked up American Goldfinch and thought we heard a Red-shouldered Hawk call (or was it a Blue Jay?) Moments later a Red-Shouldered Hawk breezed eastward passing quickly overhead. In the field to the south of the bike trail we had numerous Tree Swallows and Barn Swallows. Fish Crows called in the distance. I had to leave early and, on the way back, we had an Eastern Bluebird near the old horseshoe pits on the south loop of the figure 8 loop. When I left the group, it was about 10:45, and the temperature was 73°.

Postscript: I later found out that Greg Moyers spotted a Worm-eating Warbler. Other birds seen included Hairy Woodpecker, Chipping Sparrow, and White-breasted Nuthatch by Dan Perkuchin. These pushed our total to 37 species.

Numerous Cicadas were heard this day. One interesting sidelight was Dave Wendelken spotting a Cicada Killer. He observed it carrying a Cicada into a ground nest. That was quite unexpected and enjoyed. Well, maybe not enjoyed, but it made for a moment of fascination.

In the coming issues of the Gazette I will try to include highlights from our June and July Hillandale walks. They were well-attended and had interesting sightings and unique moments that beg to be shared.

I hope you can join us on Thursday September 22, 2022, for our last Hillandale walk of Summer. Fall arrives around 9 PM.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Ken Rank reported a total of 28 **Eastern Whip-Poor-Wills** either heard calling or seen in the road at Union Springs on May 22.

William Leigh reported at least 16-17 **White-rumped Sandpipers**, along with **Semipalmated, Least, and Spotted Sandpipers** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond near Mt. Crawford on May 25.

Herb Myers reported the continuing **Common Loon, Warbling Vireos, Eastern Kingbird, Baltimore Orioles, and Spotted Sandpipers** at Lake Shenandoah on May 26.

Matt Gingerich found a **Ruddy Turnstone** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on May 26.

William Leigh found a **Black-billed Cuckoo** along FR 85 north of Briery Branch Gap on May 30. The bird was reported several times over the next few days. Bruce Stambaugh reported a **Black-billed Cuckoo** calling in Belmont Estates on the same date.

Herb Myers had a **Blue Grosbeak** at his place in Keezletown on May 31.

Greg Moyers reported a **Great Egret** at Lake Shenandoah on June 6.

Huck Hutchens reported 17 **White-rumped Sandpipers** at partially drained Silver Lake on June 7. These birds, along with **Semipalmated Sandpipers** and **Semipalmated Plovers**, were seen by many birders over the next three days.

Greg Moyers photographed a singing **Magnolia Warbler** at Switzer Dam on June 8. Greg also reported **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Yellow-billed Cuckoos**, and 14 warbler species, including **Canada, Blackburnian, Black-throated Blue, and Chestnut-sided** on the same trip. Greg and Diane Lepkowski returned the following day and found the Magnolia still singing in the same tree. The bird was not found on subsequent trips and was likely a late migrant.

Matt Gingerich reported a tree-perched **Barn Owl** on Wengers Mill Rd on June 18.

Diane Lepkowski was shocked to find an **American Woodcock** pecking around under the bird feeder in her yard just outside of Harrisonburg on June 29.

Herb Myers reported a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** and a juvenile **Green Heron** at Lake Shenandoah on July 2.

William Leigh found a **Blue-winged Warbler** on FR 539 just north of Briery Branch Gap on July 7. William also had **Canada Warblers** and a **Ruffed Grouse** on the same trip.

Diane Lepkowski and Greg Moyers found a singing **Dickcissel** along Cross Keys Rd near Battlefied Rd on July 10. A pair with young were confirmed over the following days.

Jonathan Drescher-Lehman reported hearing a **Magnolia Warbler** calling behind the forest service work center on Oakwood Drive on July 13.

Mike Smith heard a **Red Crossbill** as it flew over Black Rock in the Shenandoah National Park on July 17.

Huck Hutchens reported a **Bonaparte's Gull** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on July 22.

Greg Moyers reported a **Stilt Sandpiper** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on July 29.

Huck Hutchens got a glimpse of what he thought may have been a **Snowy Egret** at Lake Shenandoah on July 31. The bird flew before ID could be confirmed.

Greg Moyers reported a **Wilson's Phalarope** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on Aug. 6. Also present were **Blue-winged Teal, Least, Semipalmated, Spotted, Solitary, and Pectoral Sandpipers**, and a flyover **Great Egret**.

A pair of immature **White Ibises** along Linville Creek near Williamsburg Rd were reported to eBird on Aug. 6. The birds continued at the location for over a week.

While looking for the White Ibises on Aug. 7, Matt Gingerich found a **Roseate Spoonbill** on private property south of Broadway. The bird was often seen in Linville Creek north of Williamsburg Rd over the next week. This is the first known record of this species in Rockingham County.



Roseate Spoonbill on Linville Creek

Photo credit: Kevin Shank, Nature Friend Magazine

Herb Myers heard an **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** calling at his place in Keezletown on Aug. 12.

Cory Taylor reported an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** near Briery Branch Gap on Aug. 13.

There were eBird reports of a **Swallow-tailed Kite** seen from the stretch of I-81 north of Harrisonburg and south of the Broadway exit on Aug. 14, 20, and 21. Diane Lepkowski saw the kite from Rt. 11, just north of Trinity Church Rd, on Aug. 22.

Greg Moyers reported a **Baird's Sandpiper** and a **Black-bellied Plover**, along with **Semipalmated** and **Pectoral Sandpipers, Semipalmated Plover, and Lesser Yellowlegs** at Turners Sod Farm on Captain Yancey Rd on Aug. 16.

Greg Moyers photographed a **Black-billed Cuckoo** at Paul State Forest on Aug. 20.

Huck Hutchens reported a **Black Tern** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on Aug. 20. A second individual arrived by the following morning and Doug Ruby reported 10 by that afternoon.

A **Short-billed Dowitcher** was seen at Leonard's Pond for several days beginning on Aug. 22.

Herb Myers reported that his granddaughter saw around 20 **Common Nighthawks** going over Herb's Keezletown home on the evening of Aug. 23. Unfortunately for Herb, he was in WV at the time and was unable to add that species to his little big-year yard list!

Greg Moyers reported a **Mourning Warbler** along Dunkle Hollow Rd on Aug. 24. Greg also spotted **Eurasian Collared-Doves** along the stretch of Rt. 33 just east of the intersection with Rt. 613 on Aug. 19 and Aug. 24.



White Ibis on Linville Creek

Photo Credit: Diane Lepkowski

ANNOUNCEMENTS

From our Treasurer – Audrey Shenk

Important! To keep your membership in good standing, renew before November 10. The RBC membership year begins each September. Dues are payable annually in September and are not prorated. In keeping with RBC bylaws, members who have not paid dues by the November 2022 meeting 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 bring a check or cash to the monthly meeting. Alternatively, you can mail a check made out to "RBC" to:

Audrey Shenk, RBC Treasurer
949 Northfield Ct.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

RBC Audit Volunteers Needed

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 7/1/2021 through 6/30/2022. Please contact Treasurer, Audrey Shenk (ajshenk@gmail.com) ASAP. This is a short-term commitment.

MESSAGE FROM DEBBIE (Immediate Past-President):

Elections were held at the May meeting, but no President was elected. This is one of the easiest positions to hold in our Club's hierarchy.

Both Vice Presidents are busy and should not have to shoulder the President's duties with their own. VP-Programs, Kathy Byers, is busy with securing speakers for our meetings & VP-Field Trips, Diane Lepkowski, is busy planning field trips and securing leaders for them.

"If you chase two rabbits, you will lose them both" is how the old proverb puts it. This reminds me that my goals have changed, and I will NOT serve again this coming year. I will continue on the Board as Past-President & the Club truly needs a President. The President needs to open & close the monthly meetings. Remember this is a friendly audience; no one is forced to be here! It's not really 'public speaking'; it's speaking to like-minded friends for a few minutes before the Speaker is introduced.

This is a good 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!

Unfinished Business from 2021-2022 year:

An auditor is needed to review the treasurer's records from last year. If you can balance a check book, you can do this. Check to be sure money in & out is accounted for and report back to the Executive Committee. I can help with guiding the Auditor(s) but cannot do it myself (as an Executive Committee member). Contact me at woodshar@aol.com, ASAP to find out more!

The Bluebird Trail, that the Club monitors at the Rockingham County Fairground, is in need of more monitors and also someone to take the Lead. Again, there is help from current monitors and also the VA Bluebird Society (who spoke to us at the May 2022 meeting). Contact me at woodshar@aol.com, ASAP to find out more!

Coming Soon! The RBC Bird Seed Sale!

Watch for more information through email and on the website.

Opportunity for Public Comment for solutions for the displaced Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel (HRBT) Seabird Colony

The Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) has been working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine the feasibility of constructing an island from dredged material to which the HRBT seabird colony could relocate. The program under which this work is proceeding is the Water Resources Development Act, Beneficial Uses of Dredged Materials - Continuing Authorities Program.

The project team has been gathering information to inform and identify needs of the colony and the needs that demonstrate cost-benefit to the US government (e.g., pumping distance). It has also been considering alternatives to the construction of a new island, such as moving the colony to Craney Island, including a "do nothing" alternative.

On August 6, 2022, the Corps published a public notice regarding scoping of this project. This notice included references to opportunities for public comment (due by Sept 5) and an upcoming public meeting that was held at the Fort Monroe Recreation Center in Hampton on August 17.

<https://classifieds.pilotonline.com/va/notices/public-notice-initiation-and/AC1E05AE13a2613E7F1Otw4FDEA7>

The temporary nesting grounds established at Fort Wool and on several barges has been a huge success and has offered the birds critical nesting grounds, but this is not ideal nor permanent. Please consider providing input to the Corp supporting construction of a permanent nesting island for the Royal Terns and other seabird species that were displaced from the south island of the HRBT.

More information on the temporary relocation to Fort Wool: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/blog/if-you-build-it-they-will-come/>

Virginia Bluebird Society Conference

We'll be celebrating the 25th anniversary of our founding the weekend of November 11 and 12. Whether you are an experienced bluebird landlord or just beginning, we have breakout sessions both fun and informative planned with you in mind.

Presenters include VBS' own Anne Little on Bluebirding 101 and VBS Vice President Doug Rogers providing tips and tricks for the bird photographer. Jessica Ruthenberg, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resource's Watchable Wildlife Biologist, will advise you on creating backyard habitat.

Wildlife rehabilitator Maureen Eiger will be joining us, and we have two North American Bluebird Society directors providing answers to all your questions. And while you may not have heard of our Keynote Speaker, Julie Zickefoose, I promise you will be "wowed" by her. She is a prolific artist and writer. On her website you can see her artwork, listen to her past lectures, and read her blog. She will be selling copies of her books and prints at the conference. [Welcome to Julie Zickefoose.com](https://www.juliezickefoose.com)

The conference takes place at Northern Virginia Community College in Woodbridge Virginia. Registration opens in early September on the VBS website - <https://www.virginiabluebirds.org/>. Contact ybs@virginiabluebirds.org for more information.

Archiving the RBC history

This project started winter 2019 – 20. Hopes were to have completed the collection of RBC past by this time and have passed it on to the JMU Special Collections group for archiving. Then the pandemic came, and things stalled a bit. Now that we are meeting back in person, it is time to move things along again. I am hoping that maybe some of you in looking for things to do in the last two years have done a bit of housecleaning and uncovered a treasure trove of RBC history!

Good news – we have all the newsletters from January 1978 to the present. **Does anyone have any newsletters from the 1st three years of the club, 1975 – 1977?** We do not know for sure if there were any official newsletters in those years, but if you have any (official or unofficial) please let us know. If you don't want to part with them, we can get them copied.

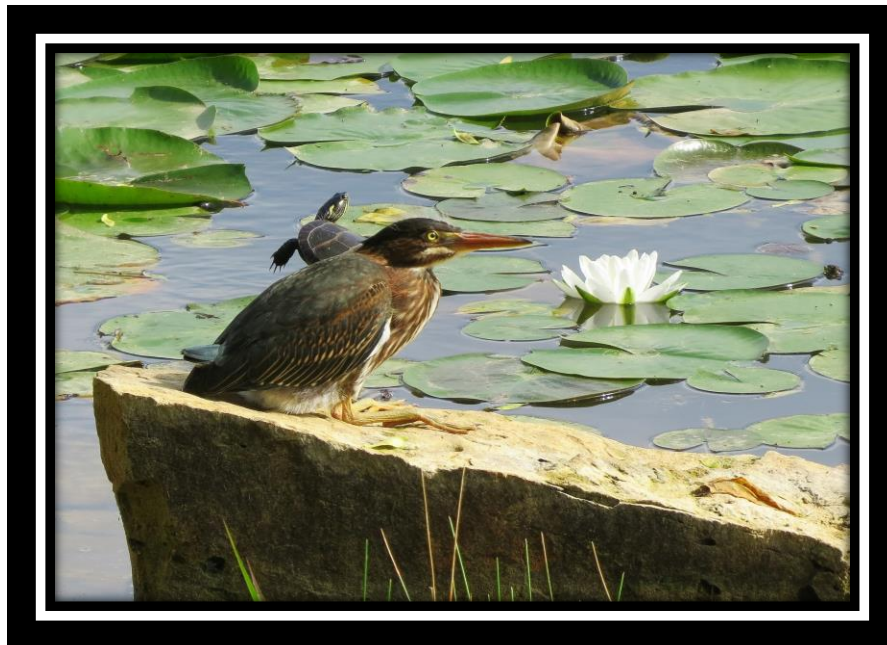
And last call for charter members. We have identified 20 with certainty and have another 17 suspects. If you are a charter member, please let us know to be sure you are included in the list. Whether or not you are a charter member, please send us names of any folks you know that were charter members.

Lastly, if you have any other documents or articles that you think speak to the history of our bird club, please let us know. Thanks, and hope to see you at the Sept meeting.

-- Art & Kathy Fovargue, art.fovargue@gmail.com

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, July 2, 2022

Photo credit: Herb Myers

Rockingham Bird Club
9 Louise Drive
Bridgewater, VA 22812



PRESIDENT: Vacant

VICE PRESIDENT: PROGRAMS – Kathy Byers

VICE PRESIDENT: FIELD TRIPS – Diane Lepkowski

SECRETARY: Stephani Moore

TREASURER: Audrey Shenk

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Kathy Fovargue, Herb Myers

GOLDFINCH GAZETTE – Denise Hoodock

EMAIL: info@rockinghambirdclub.com

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

