



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLVIII

Number 2

Oct 2022

OCTOBER MEETING

DATE: Thursday, October 13, 2022

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: Park View Mennonite Church, Fellowship Hall

PROGRAM: “Hoots and Hives” with Tom Knapp

October’s program will highlight two great topics of interest. Tom Knapp will share fun facts and photos from his nine years of monitoring Eastern Screech Owl nest boxes in the City of Harrisonburg. He will also talk about the Honeybee, which he has raised for the past 10 years. The program will include the basic biology of Honeybees, threats they face, and Honeybee rescues.

Tom Knapp is a graduate of University of Wisconsin-Madison in Natural Sciences and received his graduate degree from University of Minnesota-St. Paul in Reproductive Endocrinology and Avian Physiology. An avid birder, he has been monitoring nesting Eastern Screech Owls for many years with a recording wireless infrared camera. He started keeping bees 10 years ago and focuses on Honeybee rescues and education.

September Program Presenter Follow-up:

Tiffany Beachy, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist, spoke with the club at our September meeting. She has shared 3 documents that can be found on the RBC website under the “Meetings” tab. The documents include **Field Management Guidelines for Birds, Habitat-at-Home, and Planting Native Grasses and Forbs for Wildlife**. If anyone is interested in speaking with her, please contact her at 540-569-4664 or Tiffany.Beachy@usda.gov. Additionally, you can contact Elizabeth Elliott if you would like to schedule a site visit (540-569-4662).

FIELD TRIPS - Diane Lepkowski

Hillendale Monthly Walk, Thursday, October 20, 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

*Other trips may be scheduled; if so, they’ll be announced via email to members.

TRIP REPORTS

Hillendale Park Monthly Walk, Thursday, September 22 – Tom Mizell

On Thursday, September 20, as rains seemed imminent and winds threatened, 13 folks showed up for our Hillandale walk on the last day of summer. Kathy Byers welcomed the group at 8:30AM. Regular participants were joined by three new folks. Welcome, Martha (you've been with us before), Cynthia and Sarah Alice! We are happy you could join us.

Kathy and the birding train were well down the tracks by the time I arrived at the shelter. As I stepped out of my car at 9:15, a distant train whistle sounded, caught my attention, and tempered my writing. Blue Jays called and I saw a Red-bellied Woodpecker along with American Robins and a Northern Flicker bouncing away in flight.

I caught up with a group of 12 just beyond the concrete slab adjacent to the golf course boundary (between the northwest corner and the fork in the trail at the old Log Cabin site.) They were in the wooded area. Kathy shared with me that they had numerous sightings at the shelter as the walk began. Tennessee and Black-throated Green Warblers, and Eastern Towhee were seen earlier.

As I joined the group, they were enjoying a Red-eyed Vireo, Gray Catbird, Mourning Dove, and Eastern Wood Peewee. Chimney Swifts rapidly flew overhead. A Carolina Wren called about that time and Magnolia Warbler was teasing us in the treetops. Within moments a Yellow-billed Cuckoo appeared as well. It gave us a view and then flew elsewhere. Small birds kept us looking upward. They included Northern Parula and American Redstart, Carolina Chickadees and House Finches all flitting about. By now we were in the area where the old Log Cabin used to proudly sit. A Brown Thrasher in the low brush did not escape detection. We lingered in the old cabin area for 10 or 15 minutes before proceeding south along the stream channel.

We begin the Southwest Loop around 10 o'clock and a Pileated Woodpecker was sighted. It was a couple hundred yards away working in a tree above the basketball hoops. Not one, not two but three Pileated Woodpeckers gave us an opportunity to do some long-distance viewing. Were these the same three we saw last month? Maybe.....

Another surprise! A Red-breasted Nuthatch in a White Pine just along the stream channel and below the pedestrian bridge. The White Pine is between the stream and the main park road and on this day was sporting a blue balloon. Perhaps it was a Blue Ribbon for the Red-breasted Nuthatch. Anyhow, the Nuthatch was a pleasant sight, we watched it as it flew back-and-forth from the Pine Tree to a Walnut Tree apparently eating seeds. In the same general area, we observed a Broad-winged Hawk flying to the south.

The walk concluded around 11 AM. Other birds enjoyed this morning included Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Purple Martin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch and Northern Mockingbird, totaling 33 species.

Fall has since officially arrived. Hope you can join us on Thursday October 20 at Hillandale Park.

Hillandale EXTRA BONUS WALK, September 9 – *Greg Moyers*

Around 20 members of the RBC attended the walk at Hillandale Park on Sept. 9. The walk got off to a good start with a Cape May Warbler and an American Redstart in a tall pine just off the path. As we walked along the stretch beside the golf course, we heard and got a brief glimpse of a Warbling Vireo. Warbler activity picked up as well, with Black-and-white, Black-throated Green, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue, Common Yellowthroat, and nice views of a Blackburnian

Warbler. Other good finds included a Veery, Cooper's Hawk, and a Common Raven calling in the distance. Tom Lord emailed later that he had seen a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher while trailing behind the group. In all, we spotted nine warbler species and around 40 total species.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Diane Lepkowski has had some good sightings at her place near Harrisonburg, including a **Prairie Warbler** on Aug. 24, **Canada Warbler**, **Hooded Warbler**, and 27 **Common Nighthawks** on Sept. 2, and a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** on Sept. 8.

Mike Smith reported a **Common Nighthawk** flying over the Sentara Park soccer field in Harrisonburg on Aug. 25.

Mike Donaldson reported an immature **White Ibis** at the Broadway Wastewater Plant on Aug. 26. Greg Moyers reported what may have been the same bird flying over the wastewater plant the following evening.

Bill Benish and Robyn Puffenbarger had 45 **Common Nighthawks** and a **Double-crested Cormorant** fly over their place in Verona on Aug. 27.

Sharon and Jay Landis watched two pairs of **Great Crested Flycatchers** chasing and "fly-catching" at Slate Lick fields on Aug. 28.

Diane Holsinger and Cory Taylor each reported a **White-rumped Sandpiper** and a **Stilt Sandpiper** at the Broadway Wastewater Plant on Aug. 31.

Matt Gingerich reported an **American Golden-Plover** flying over his place in Linville on Sept. 2.

William Leigh reported a probable **Wilson's Phalarope** at the Oakwood Drive farm pond on Sept. 2.

There were eBird reports of two **Mississippi Kites** soaring over Hillandale Park on Sept. 3.

Herb Myers reached his goal of 75 yard birds for the year on Sept. 4 when a fall flock, including **Chestnut-sided**, **Black-and-white**, **Black-throated Green**, and **Blackburnian Warblers** moved through at his Keezletown residence.

Greg Moyers reported 13 warbler species, including **Blue-winged**, **Canada**, **Tennessee**, **Magnolia**, and **Cape May**, at Paul State Forest on Sept. 4. Greg found another **Blue-winged Warbler** at Hillandale Park on Sept. 5.

Several birders reported **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction fields on Lumber Mill Rd on Sept. 6. Allen Larner reported **American Golden-Plovers** at this location on Sept. 8. Two **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** and as many as 27 **American Golden-Plovers** were seen there over the following weeks. There were also unconfirmed eBird reports of a **Western Sandpiper** at this location on Sept. 11. Matt Gingerich photographed a **Sanderling** at this location on Sept. 12.

Harold Jones reported a **Sanderling** at Leonard's Pond on Sept. 6. A second Sanderling showed up a few days later and many birders were able to see the birds over the next week. While watching the

Sanderlings on Sept. 12, Mike Donaldson watched a **Cooper's Hawk** swoop in and take a **Solitary Sandpiper**.

Greg Moyers reported a **White-rumped Sandpiper**, along with **Semipalmated Plovers**, **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, and a **Least Sandpiper** at the Broadway Wastewater Plant on Sept. 9.

Mike Smith reported an **Osprey** along the Shenandoah River at Elkton on Sept. 9.

Matt Gingerich reported **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**, and **Merlin** at Switzer Dam on Sept. 10.

Bill Benish reported a **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **Purple Finch**, and **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** at he and Robyn Puffenbarger's place on Sept. 13. Bill reported a **Philadelphia Vireo** and seven warbler species at their place on Sept. 21.

Mike Smith's yard list at his home east of Elkton included **Swainson's Thrush** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** on Sept. 15, a pair of **Magnolia Warblers** on Sept. 21, and **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and two **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** on Sept. 23.

Greg Moyers reported a **Merlin** at Switzer Dam on Sept. 16 and again on Sept. 28. It seems likely that this is the same bird Matt Gingerich originally reported on Sept. 10. Also on Sept. 28 at Switzer Dam, Greg reported a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** and a mixed flock of thrushes which included **Wood**, **Swainson's**, **Gray-cheeked**, and **Hermit**.

William Leigh reported a **Connecticut Warbler** at Briery Branch reservoir on Sept. 17.

Greg Moyers reported an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** perched on a snag along Rt. 33 just before the turn to Switzer Lake Rd on Sept. 20. Greg reported a **Lincoln's Sparrow** at the Swift Run Overlook on Skyline Drive on Sept. 21.

Matt Gingerich reported an **American Bittern** at his place in Linville on the evening of Sept. 23. Matt watched the bird circle for several minutes before heading south. Matt suspects the bird had been roosting on the property during the day and was lifting off to continue its migration that night.

Greg Moyers reported a two-**Connecticut Warbler** Day on Skyline Drive on Sept. 25 with sightings at the Pocosin Cabin Trail and the Eaton Hollow Trail.

Cory Taylor reported a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Paul State Forest on Sept. 28.

Greg Moyers and Randy Cline reported a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Hillandale Park on Sept. 29.

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 pro-rated. 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 Bird Seed Sale 2022

We'd love to see a big increase in orders this year! We offer good quality seed through our local supplier, BFG. The proceeds help cover the costs of our programs and support a broad range of approximately ten conservation groups.

Members should have received order information at the end of September. On-line ordering is available through the Rockingham Bird Club website. Orders are due by **Tuesday October 18th**. Seed Pick-up Day will be **Saturday November 12, 9:00am-1:00pm** at the Poultry Exhibit Building at Rockingham Fairgrounds. Please contact Kathy Byers for questions or last-minute orders. Volunteers for Pick-up Day should contact Kathy: kkbyers77@gmail.com, 540-820-6517



American Golden Plover, Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction

Photo credit: Greg Moyers

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](http://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 vbs@virginiabluebirds.org for more information.

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

In search of...

I'm a beginning birder & am interested in buying a used spotting scope from someone in your club who is interesting in upgrading this year. If you could pass the word, I would appreciate it.

Gary M. Monger
(540) 908-0350

Rockingham Bird Club
9 Louise Drive
Bridgewater, VA 22812



PRESIDENT: Vacant

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GOLDFINCH GAZETTE – Denise Hoodock

EMAIL: info@rockingambirdclub.com

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

