



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLVIII

Number 4

Dec 2022

DECEMBER MEETING - Please note change in day/date below

****DATE:** Wednesday, December 7, 2022

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: Park View Mennonite Church, Fellowship Hall

PROGRAM: *“When Archives Take Flight: The Bridgewater College Birding Journal, 1918 and 1947- 1950”* with Stephanie Gardner

While inventorying treasures of the library vault, Bridgewater College Special Collections Librarian Stephanie Gardner rediscovered a historic birding notebook. This ledger has secrets to share and a few mysteries to explore. Stephanie will present a story about bringing modern methods of preservation and access to a historic manuscript and meet the fascinating people (and the birds) who make it a one-of-a-kind primary source.

FIELD TRIPS – Diane Lepkowski

Hillendale Monthly Walk, Thursday, December 15, 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

Hillendale Last Walk of Fall 2022, Wednesday, December 21, with Tom Mizell: Meet at the Main shelter parking lot at 3:30 PM. Bring a flashlight. Old Man Winter arrives at 4:47 PM.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT– Bill Benish, CDC Compiler

Our Rockingham “VARC” Christmas Bird Count will be held on **Saturday, December 17, 2022**, weather permitting. I am excited to say that leaders are arranged for all the areas and all leaders have helpers. Although there may not be space to join a field party, please let me know if you would like to join if a space opens. Also, anyone who lives within the count circle area can serve as a “Feeder Watcher” to count birds from your home if you coordinate with me ahead of time. We need to ensure that data collected is coordinated and adheres to the protocol format in order to be included into the count.

You can see our circle area boundary by searching for “VARC” at this map link from Audubon for the 123rd overall year of the CBC which began in 1900:

<https://audubon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=ac275eeb01434cedb1c5dcd0fd3fc7b4>

Also, the VSO maintains a link to some past results at this link specific to Virginia:

<https://www.virginiabirds.org/christmas-bird-count>

Please reach out to VARC CBC Compiler Bill Benish wcbenish@gmail.com 540.908.7336 with any questions.

TRIP REPORTS

Hillandale Park Monthly Walk, Thursday, November 17 – Tom Mizell

On Thursday, November 17, twelve members of the Rockingham Bird Club and Bill Call and his dog Calvin, regular participants in the walks, enjoyed a chilly morning (near freezing temps) at Hillandale Park. Gloves were on as we observed a Cooper’s Hawk and a Red-tailed Hawk circling together overhead. They entertained us as the group gathered. Earlier, Bill Call, who often gives us heads up on different species we might see, had observed a Sharp-shinned Hawk take down a Green-winged Teal near the golf course.

Our wish list birds included Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Northern Flicker and Pileated Woodpecker. During the opening introductions Anne Nielsen shared her birding experience with the son of Roger Tory Peterson. I asked Anne to provide a write-up about that experience and she graciously provided the following:

“I visited my friend, Diane, who once lived in the Harrisonburg area, the last week of October, and our time together was splendid, with lots of outdoor surprises including a “bird sit” with Roger Tory Peterson’s son, Lee. He and his wife live at Crosslands, a retirement community in Kennett Square, PA and have bird lovers over to join them for a couple hours each week.

Their back patio is adjacent to a patch of woodland with a pond behind it, great bird habitat, and it’s filled with bird feeders of every kind with every kind of bird treat. While we saw nothing too exotic while we were there, the opening act was a Pileated Woodpecker who swooped in close, making lots of noise. There were all the usual feeder birds—including chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, finches and woodpeckers. The most memorable, two feeders side by side. On one was perched a Downy Woodpecker, and on the other his Hairy cousin. Seen together that way they were easily distinguished. Don’t we wish they were more often that cooperative?”

Thank you Anne for sharing.

I often include a somewhat chronological listing of bird sightings but in this write-up I will be drawing from Kathy Byers’ ebird report as I misplaced my field notes. Thank you, Kathy! If you happen to see a bank ledger with a listing of birds along any of your travels let me know.

In addition to the Cooper’s Hawk and the Red-tailed Hawk at the beginning our early walk, observations included Blue Jay, Northern Cardinal, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Carolina Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse. Our first target bird sighting occurred within a few minutes of the walk getting underway as Mike Donaldson spotted a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker near the shelter. It must have heard its name called as it gave many of us good looks.

We watched a Northern Flicker fly away from us. It’s back white spot bouncing up and down in flight. At the northwest Corner Pedestrian Bridge we found the deceased Green-winged Teal along the

stream. Some of the group scanned the golf course pond areas for a possible Cackling Goose. That turned out to be a Canada Goose. Someone thought it was having fun as they heard it “cackle”. Maybe next time. That golf course excursion was productive as it also turned up a Belted Kingfisher. Golden-crowned Kinglets were in the northwest corner along with many other small birds feeding in the treetops. As we proceeded along the golf course boundary and before we reached the concrete slab, we spotted a juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker in a hollow tree just across the golf course fence. White-throated Sparrows were numerous along the gravel trail. Osage Orange fruits were abundant and tempted some of us to practice our trail bowling skills. American Goldfinch called out it’s chirpy “hello” as it flew overhead. Don’t you enjoy their in-flight singing? Black and Turkey Vultures soared this morning. We also had Hairy Woodpecker, a Common Raven, European Starlings and American Crow.

Some immature White-crowned Sparrows made an appearance. Over the years we seldom have seen them in the park. We also had Dark-eyed Juncos and Song Sparrows.

We were fortunate to have all our area woodpeckers show up this morning. I had to leave about 10:30 and by then we had 31 species. Hope you can join us on Thursday, December 15 at 8:30 AM at the main shelter. Also, we will conduct our last walk of Fall of 2022 on Wednesday, December 21 (12/21/22). Bring a flashlight as it may be dark when winter arrives. Meet at the main shelter at 3:30 PM. We will wind up our afternoon walk after greeting Old Man Winter as his ETA is 4:47 PM. I hope to see you in December!

PS. Nominations for a name for the concrete slab are still being accepted. So far Osage Orange Bridge and Calvin’s Bridge have been suggested. On a whim I Googled “Bridge day” and learned our neighboring state celebrates Bridge Day on the 3rd Saturday in October. Perhaps we will arrive at a suitable name for next year’s celebration.

Incidentally, our 12 members present today included both Past-President Debbie Harrison and our new President Mike Donaldson. THANK YOU both very much for your leadership!

“I am glad we have been able to enjoy our club walks this year as COVID protective protocols were lessened. As 2022 winds down, I share some images from earlier in this day’s walk and then as I was departing the park.

- The group gathering at the shelter under the two circling Hawks.

- Anne leaving early after enjoying the first hour’s group outing.

- Linda, Don, Dan, Bob and Zach departing a bit later as we proceeded past the old log cabin site.

- Before I got in my car to depart seeing the two brothers Don and Dan sitting on the bench talking and looking into the woods, but mainly talking.

- Bill B, Debbie, Mike, Kathy and Randy strolling up the road near the Volleyball Court as I drove out the main road.

The Covid years would not have hosted such a group outing and it’s good to have these images afresh.” - Tom

Correction: Oops! October’s write-up mistakenly reported a Fox Sparrow. We will see it another day!

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Greg Moyers reported a **Black-bellied Plover** flying low over the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on Oct. 30. The bird appeared to leave without landing.

Cory Taylor reported 24 **Tundra Swans** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant on Nov. 9. Greg Moyers reported a female **Redhead, Northern Pintails, Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, Hooded Mergansers**, and many other duck species at the site later the same day.

Mike Smith's yard birds over the past month at his place east of Elkton include **Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Purple Finch, Common Raven, Hermit Thrush, Brown Creeper, Hairy Woodpecker**, and **Red-breasted Nuthatches** on Nov. 1, **Eastern Towhee** and **Eastern Phoebe** on Nov. 7, a **Fox Sparrow** at the feeder on Nov. 18, and **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** on Nov. 26.

Mike Smith reported a **Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, Winter Wren, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, and three **Hermit Thrushes** (one singing), among others, at a private location near Elkton on Nov. 7.

On Nov. 9, Sharon Landis was able to positively confirm her tenth sparrow species on she and Jay's property at Linville – a **Fox Sparrow**.

A **Hermit Thrush** was a regular at Diane Lepkowski's feeders beginning Nov 9, last seen Nov 22.

Three female **Evening Grosbeaks** visited Karen, Everette & Annie Shank's feeders on Nov 13. **Purple Finches** have been regulars there through the month.

Diane Holsinger reported a **Cooper's Hawk** taking a **European Starling** at her place near Timberville on Nov. 20. The following day, Nov. 21, Diane found a **Common Loon** and four **Ring-billed Gulls** at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Tom Lord reported a Thanksgiving Day **Fox Sparrow** at his place in Bridgewater on Nov. 24.

Herb Myers had a **Winter Wren** and a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at his place in Keezletown on Nov. 24 and added two **Purple Finches** to his yard year list on Nov. 27.

Greg Moyers reported an **American Tree Sparrow** on Raders Church Rd, north of Timberville on Nov. 24.

The **Eared Grebe** at the Broadway Wastewater Plant continues to be seen as of Nov. 27.

Greg Moyers reported a **Black Scoter** at Lake Shenandoah on Nov. 27. That afternoon, probably seeking the scoter, Peter Norment reported a real rarity -- a **MacGillivray's Warbler!!** Matt Gingrich photographed it the following morning (Nov 28.) This may be a first County record and the first Virginia record west of the Coastal Plain. WOW!

Also at Lake Shenandoah: on Nov 27, a late **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, photographed by William Leigh, and on Nov 28, a late **Gray Catbird**, seen by many.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Seed Sale Success!

Thank you to everyone who purchased seed and supported our causes. Special thanks to Winona Scott with BFG Supply Company, Annie Shank for making 250 suet cakes, our amazing crew out at the fairgrounds, and to Audrey Shank who makes all things online possible!

Leonard Tuber Records

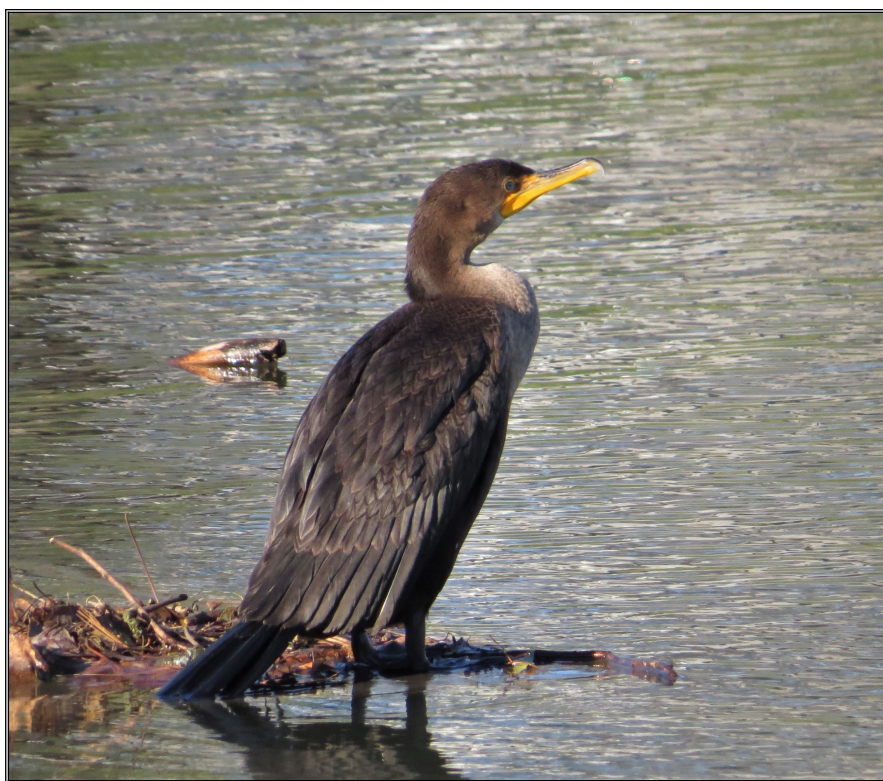
The October & November 2009 RBC newsletters included tributes to Leonard Tuber (the namesake for Leonard's Pond). It was mentioned that he left a box of his records to the bird club. Does anyone know what happened to these? If so, please let our Historian, Art Fovargue, know: art.fovargue@gmail.com.

THANK YOU....from Past-President Debbie Harrison

Thank you for the 'lovely parting gifts' of \$\$ at area restaurants. Joining the Bird Club is a "HOOT," and presiding for the last 8 years was a joy. It's not hard to lead a group that has so many engaged members. I hope to see you all at future meetings & outings. Bird on. --- Debbie

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Double-Crested Cormorant at Newman Lake, November 20, 2022

Photo credit: Greg Moyers



Very Rare MacGillivray's Warbler at Lake Shenandoah, November 28, 2022

Photo credit: Matt Gingerich



Black Scoter, Lake Shenandoah

Photo credit: Diane Lepkowski

Rockingham Bird Club
9 Louise Drive
Bridgewater, VA 22812



PRESIDENT: Mike Donaldson, effective 1/1/2023

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>

