



# Goldfinch Gazette

## The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLVIII

Number 7

Mar 2023

DATE: Thursday, March 9, 2023

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: Park View Mennonite Church, Fellowship Hall

PROGRAM: "Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary" *presented by Sarah Cooperman*

Sarah Cooperman, Executive Director of the sanctuary, will speak to the club about her organization's work rehabilitating wildlife in Central Virginia. Sarah will talk about songbird patients and protocols for caring for birds. As a special bonus, she may be able to bring along a couple of critters!

### FIELD TRIPS – *Diane Lepkowski*

**American Woodcock Trip, with Diane Lepkowski:** Tentative date: Tuesday evening, March 7, with Diane Lepkowski. Time & location to be determined. (We might meet around Madison Run Fire Rd, east of Grottoes, and may incorporate a late afternoon /early evening hike at Madison Run beforehand.) Please contact Diane at [dianelep1@yahoo.com](mailto:dianelep1@yahoo.com) if interested.

**Hillandale Bird Walk, Monday, March 20:** Welcome Spring with us for a specially timed walk on Monday, March 20. We will meet at Shelter 12 at **4:30 pm** to catch our last birds of winter and first birds of spring which begins at 5:24pm. Contact Tom Mizell at [tomvaz@cs.com](mailto:tomvaz@cs.com) or 540-810-5898, or Kathy Byers at [kkbyers77@gmail.com](mailto:kkbyers77@gmail.com) or 540-820-6517 for questions or more info.

### TRIP REPORTS

**Hillandale Bird and Brunch Walk – Tom Mizell/Kathy Byers**

A nice group of folks gathered at Hillandale on a wonderfully warm February morning. Bill C and Calvin gave the group a quick update of birds seen so far that morning. Unfortunately, the screech owl that was previously seen close by, was not around that morning. The birds did not seem to be hanging around the shelter area, so the group moved on down the trail. With Blue Jays leading the way, several of the usual suspects were spotted such as, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Carolina Wrens, Chickadees and Tufted-mice. The group was excited to get nice views of an adult Red-headed Woodpecker. Fingers crossed these birds take up residency here! A bit later in the morning, part of the group headed over to Kathy Byers' home for some coffee and breakfast treats. The group that remained walked up the bike path toward the elementary school. Randy C pointed out where he believed Red-tailed Hawks were nest building, and the group was able to see them in action. Killdeer, Song and White-crowned Sparrow were also added to the list. With the count close to 30 species, some of the

group decided to stop in at Kathy's house for food and fellowship.

### **2023 Raptor / Waterfowl Count – Diane Lepkowski**

Many thanks to the eleven participants who canvassed the County on February 11, for this annual count! We tallied 38 species in all. Especially nice finds included one Virginia Rail, seven Cackling Geese and the continuing flock of seven Sandhill Cranes that have been reported on-and-off north of Harrisonburg. Other than Canada Geese and Mallards, most of the large waterfowl groups were at the Broadway Wastewater (as has been the case all winter.) Other waterfowl were Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Gadwall, A. Wigeon, A. Black Duck, N. Shoveler, Common Merganser, N. Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, and A. Coot. Raptor highlights were five owl species (Barred, Great Horned (1), Eastern Screech (2), Barn (3) and Short-eared (1),) five Bald Eagles (one on a nest,) two Merlins, and a Peregrine Falcon. Other raptor species were Turkey and Black Vulture, Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel. Also recorded were Common Raven, Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Great Blue Heron, and Killdeer.

## **BIRD SIGHTINGS**

Greg Moyers reported three **Short-eared Owls** along Grist Mill Rd on Jan. 27.

Cory Taylor reported 11 **Long-tailed Ducks** at the Broadway Wastewater Plant on Feb. 1.

Diane Lepkowski reported three **Common Goldeneyes** at Lake Shenandoah on Feb. 1. Greg Moyers reported a **Canvasback** at the lake on Feb. 4.

Herb Myers reported a **Hermit Thrush** at his water bath in Keezletown on Feb. 5. On Feb. 7, Herb and Sarah reported **Eastern Meadowlarks, Horned Larks,** and an **American Coot** at the Duck Run Natural Cemetery.

Tom Lord reported a pair of **Common Mergansers** in Augusta Co. on a stream north of Verona on Feb. 11.

Diane Lepkowski reported a **Great Horned Owl** calling at her place east of Harrisonburg on Feb. 12.

Mike Smith saw a pair of **Great Blue Herons** at a stick nest 25 ft high in a tree at the Merck Swamp along Rt. 340 south of Elkton on Feb. 16.

On Feb. 24, Sharon Landis reported that **Eastern Meadowlarks** have returned to their place near Singers Glen.

**Rusty Blackbirds** were reported at Ore Wash Rd near Elkton Feb. 24 by Diane Lepkowski and Feb. 26 by Greg Moyers.

Diane Holsinger reported an incredible group of 247 **Tundra Swans** at the Broadway Wastewater Plant on Feb. 25. Over a hundred were still there the following day. Diane spent a month in Arizona to start the year and recorded 290 species, including such notables as **Long-Eared** and **Burrowing Owls, Mountain Plover, Painted Redstart, Townsend's Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, Sandhill Crane, Chestnut-collared Longspur,** and **Rivoli's and Violet-crowned Hummingbirds,** among others.

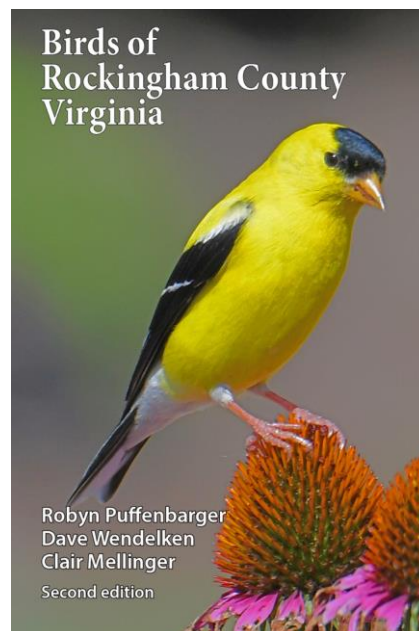
Mike Smith reported at least eight **Tundra Swans** at a pond near Honeysuckle Rd and East Rockingham High School on Feb. 26.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Birds of Rockingham County Virginia, 2nd ed., available for sale at March meeting (arrive early)**

This beautiful, updated version contains separate accounts for each of the 314 reported species and is illustrated by more than 90 crisp color photos. The book follows the format of Editor Clair Mellinger's 1998 first edition and will be a valuable resource for birders interested in detailed information about birding in the County along with when, where, and which species to expect; and which to be surprised by!

The book describes current information on 21 popular birding locations, how to access them, and species occurrence at each. It also provides interesting information on the geography and geology of the County and describes frequency and population trends of species using a host of data sources and the knowledge of our experienced birders. The data includes local and digital (eBird) reports, Christmas Bird Counts, *Goldfinch Gazette* reports, and data comparisons between the first (1985–1989) Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas and eBird field reports for the 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas project (2016–2020.) (Please note that this book is not a field guide and does not delve into details of species identification, although it does frequently touch on suitable habitat.)



We're pleased to announce a discount (below-cost) price of \$24.95 for current RBC members. The price will be \$29.95 for nonmembers, and both prices include sales tax. Sales will begin at 6:45 pm and will be by **cash or check only**.

### **Volunteers sought for Nominating Committee**

The Club will be holding its annual elections this May, and it is the duty of the Executive Committee to name a Nominating Committee of three members at the Club's March meeting. The Nominating Committee will consist of immediate past president Debbie Harrison as chair and two volunteer Club members. Members of the Nominating Committee typically do not run for office. The committee will prepare a slate of one nominee for each of the following positions:

- Officers: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer (these officers serve one-year terms)
- Two Members-at-large, who serve two-year terms and may serve one successive term.

Additional information about the elections and duties of the officers can be found within the [Club's Constitution and By-laws](#).

Please help the Club move forward by volunteering to serve on the Nominating Committee. To do so, or to express your interest in one of the leadership positions, please contact Debbie Harrison at [woodshar@aol.com](mailto:woodshar@aol.com) or Mike Donaldson at [mike.donaldson@outlook.com](mailto:mike.donaldson@outlook.com). You may also express your interest in person at the March meeting.

## **Bluebird Trail Monitoring**

This year the Rockingham County Fairgrounds "Bluebird Trail" needs monitors. All monitors work on a rotational basis with each team serving one week every month (April thru August). This schedule requires approximately one hour each month, usually accomplished on a Friday or Saturday.

You will be paired up with an experienced monitor and substitutes are available whenever needed for required absences. If interested or need more information contact: Joy Beaman, [jybeaman@gmail.com](mailto:jybeaman@gmail.com) or 540-810-4595.

## **Iguazu Falls**

At last month's club meeting, we enjoyed Sarah Swank's presentation "Birding in Brazil". However, she was unable to get a video that showed the amazing Iguazu Falls. To see the video now, please click on the following link. [\(146\) DRONE footage | Iguazu Falls - YouTube](#)

## **Bird Club Book Club (BCBC)**

The BCBC will meet remotely, via Zoom, on Thursday March 16, at 6:00 PM to discuss "The Secret Lives of Bats: My Adventures with the World's Most Misunderstood Mammals" by Merlin Tuttle. If you're interested in joining the discussion or learning more about the book club, please contact Elizabeth Ihle at [elizaihle@gmail.com](mailto:elizaihle@gmail.com).

Book info - <https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/23719330>.  
(Next meeting, April 20, we'll read "Fuzz" by Mary Roach.)



**Photo above and two photos below: Tundra Swans at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant, February 25, 2023**

Photo credit: Alex Shipherd



Rockingham Bird Club  
9 Louise Drive  
Bridgewater, VA 22812



**PRESIDENT: Mike Donaldson**

**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**

**HISTORIAN: Art Fovargue**

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