



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume XLVIII

Number 1

Sept 2023

DATE: Thursday, September 14, 2023

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: Park View Mennonite Church, Fellowship Hall

PROGRAM: Galapagos Islands presented by Linda Miller

Our club member, Linda Miller, will share photos of birds and other wildlife observed on a recent trip to the Galapagos Islands.

Please call Kathy Byers for questions or more information at 540-820-6517

FIELD TRIPS – *Diane Lepkowski*

Hillandale Bird Walk, Tuesday, September 12: We will meet at Shelter 12 at 8:30 AM. Contact Tom Mizell at ztomvaz@cs.com or 540-810-5898, or Kathy Byers at kkbyers77@gmail.com or 540-820-6517 for questions or more info.

Hillandale Fall Equinox Bird Walk, Friday, September 22: We will meet at Shelter 12 at 8:30 AM. Contact Tom Mizell at ztomvaz@cs.com or 540-810-5898, or Kathy Byers at kkbyers77@gmail.com or 540-820-6517 for questions or more info.

Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch: Date TBD (Sept 16, 17 or 18): <https://www.rockfishgaphawkwatch.org/> Visiting anytime is FINE and HIGHLY RECOMMENDED but we'll aim for a Club visit one of these three days, weather permitting. This should be near the peak of Broad-winged Hawk migration. Peak day typically falls between Sept 16-23, sometimes with over 10,000 hawks passing through! Contact Diane Lepkowski if interested – dianelep1@yahoo.com.

**Additional trips that may be scheduled will be announced via email to members.*

TRIP REPORTS

August Hillandale Walk – Tom Mizell

On Thursday, August 10, 2023, ten enthusiastic birders met at Hillandale Park at 8:30 AM for our monthly walk. The sky was overcast, it was 68° and rain had been in the forecast for the start time for the previous several days. A nice group braved the forecast, and we were rewarded as the rains held off. It was interesting to me that there were 3 first timers for our walk. Each recently moved here from Hawaii, California, and Georgia respectively. Thanks in large part to the RBC website for spreading

the word about our club. Wishlist birds included Northern Cardinal, Blue Grosbeak, Hairy Woodpecker and Screech Owl. Let the walk begin before the rains! Yes! Blue Jays! We are getting accustomed to hearing or seeing you first. Is your knowing that you are seen first the reason why you chatter so much?

In the first 30 minutes we listed an additional 13 species including Common Grackle, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, Northern Mockingbird, American Robin, Eastern Towhee, Chimney Swift, Pileated Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher (Justin), Common Flicker, Carolina Wren, Downy Woodpecker (Chris) and Tufted Titmouse. By 9:30 AM, we added Northern Cardinal (Ann's wish as she had not seen a Cardinal since moving from California) and Indigo Bunting.

We reached the new bike trail about 9:30 AM. Very soon we picked up House Finches, Red-tailed Hawk, American Crow, and an ominous hornet's nest along the trail's edge. We had been forewarned about the nest by Bill, one of the park's frequent walkers. The hornet sighting provided an impromptu safety session. Now well on the bike trail and paralleling the golf course we added American Goldfinch, European Starling, Song Sparrow, Carolina Chickadee, Fish Crow, Eastern Bluebird, Turkey Vulture and Phoebe. It was now 10:30 AM. Four of the original group of 10 continued west and the other four headed back east to the parking lot. Each foursome picked up an additional species with Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Hairy Woodpecker rounding out today's count at 30 species. Our walk concluded at 10:45 AM. Folks commented that the morning weather was very comfortable and pleasant. We all had expected rain but luckily the rain did not show up until around 1:00 PM.

Join us in September and help us find some fall warblers!

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Greg Moyers reported a **White-rumped Sandpiper** at the Fort Lynne Rd pond on May 31.

There were second-hand reports of a **Sandhill Crane** in the Broadway area on June 2.

William Leigh reported an **Alder Flycatcher** at FR 539, Hone Quarry Ridge Trail, on Shenandoah Mtn on June 10. The bird was reported numerous times in the following weeks. Two Alders were occasionally reported.

Greg Moyers reported three **White-rumped Sandpipers** at Leonard's Pond on June 12.

Roseanne Beery found a **Common Gallinule** along Dry River west of Dayton on Rt. 257 on June 10. Several birders were able to see the bird from the Dry River Bridge over the next few days.

Greg Moyers reported at least two **Yellow-breasted Chats** at First Mountain State Forest on June 25.

Mae Houff reported 10 **Common Mergansers** on the river at her place near the Augusta/Rockingham Co. border off Keezletown Rd on July 10 and again on Aug. 14.

Newly exposed "mud" flats at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant have brought in large numbers of shorebirds since late July. Cory Taylor reported 12 **Semipalmated Sandpipers** on July 24. On Aug. 3, Cory reported **Spotted, Least, Semipalmated, and Pectoral Sandpipers** as well as **Semipalmated Plover**, and **Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs**. Diane Holsinger reported a **Wilson's Phalarope** on Aug. 6. Cory reported a **Baird's Sandpiper** on Aug. 17. Up to two Baird's continue to be seen as of Sept. 3. Greg Moyers reported a **Red-necked Phalarope** on Aug. 19. Matt Gingerich reported Sanderling on Aug. 26. Greg Moyers photographed a **Western Sandpiper** on Aug. 26. Matt Gingerich photographed

a different **Western** the following day. William Leigh reported a **Black Tern** on Aug. 28 and a **Red-necked Phalarope** on Aug. 31. Greg Moyers reported a **Black Tern** on Sept. 2.

Also, of note at the Broadway Wastewater Treatment Plant, the **Ruddy Ducks**, which have remained through the summer the past year or two, remained until mid-Aug. but haven't been seen in the past month. A female **Ringed Teal** has been reported off-and-on throughout the summer. Cory Taylor has occasionally reported two females. These exotics are presumed to be escaped birds.

Huck Hutchens found an immature, **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** just a mile or so outside the county along the North Fork of the Shenandoah River in Shenandoah County on Aug. 3. The bird was routinely seen from under the bridge at New Market Depot Rd and was photographed feeding on large crayfish.

Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski reported a **Baird's Sandpiper** at Leonard's Pond on Aug. 20.

Mike Smith heard an **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** at his place near Elkton on Aug. 22. Mike spotted a **Common Nighthawk** at Sentara Park in Harrisonburg on Aug. 24. At his place on Aug. 31, Mike reported several birds feeding on grapes in his willow tree, including **Baltimore Oriole**, **Scarlet Tanagers**, and **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**.

Matt Gingerich reported a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** at Hillandale Park on Aug. 29.

Diane Lepkowski had an **Eastern Screech-Owl** at her place near Harrisonburg on Aug. 30. On Sept. 3, Diane had a **Tennessee Warbler** at her water feature in the morning and returned that afternoon to find a **Cape May Warbler** at her hummingbird feeder!

Doug Ruby reported a **Black Tern** at Silver Lake on Sept. 2.

Alex Capaldi and Randy Cline got a quick glimpse of a **Connecticut Warbler** at Hillandale Park on Sept. 3.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SECRETARY NEEDED

Our club needs a secretary as soon as possible. The duties of the Secretary are primarily to take notes and transcribe the minutes of our monthly Club meetings and Executive Committee meetings (3 per year). As an officer of the Club, the secretary is a voting member of the Executive Committee and thus helps shape Club activities, policies, and initiatives.

Please let Mike Donaldson (mike.donaldson@outlook.com) or any of our Executive Committee members know if you are interested or know someone who may be interested in helping the club in this important role.

TREASURER'S REPORT – *Audrey Shenk, Treasurer*

Important! To keep your membership in good standing, renew before **November 9**. 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 2023 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 inspect our Treasurer’s records for 7/1/2022 through 6/30/2023. Please contact Treasurer, Audrey Shenk (ajshenk@gmail.com) ASAP. This is a short-term commitment.

Bird Club Book Club – Elizabeth Ihle

This long-standing Club usually meets the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM but will skip October. Since Covid, we have met via Zoom. We read bird and nature-related books, chosen from member suggestions. Upcoming selections include *Halcyon Journey*, *In Search of the Belted Kingfisher* by Marina Richie (November,) and *A World on the Wing* by Scott Weidensaul (Dec & January.) If you are interested in joining us, please email Elizabeth Ihle: elizaihle@gmail.com

RBC Bluebird Trail – Joy Beaman, Bluebird Trail Leader

A special thanks to the 2023 Bluebird Trail Monitors:

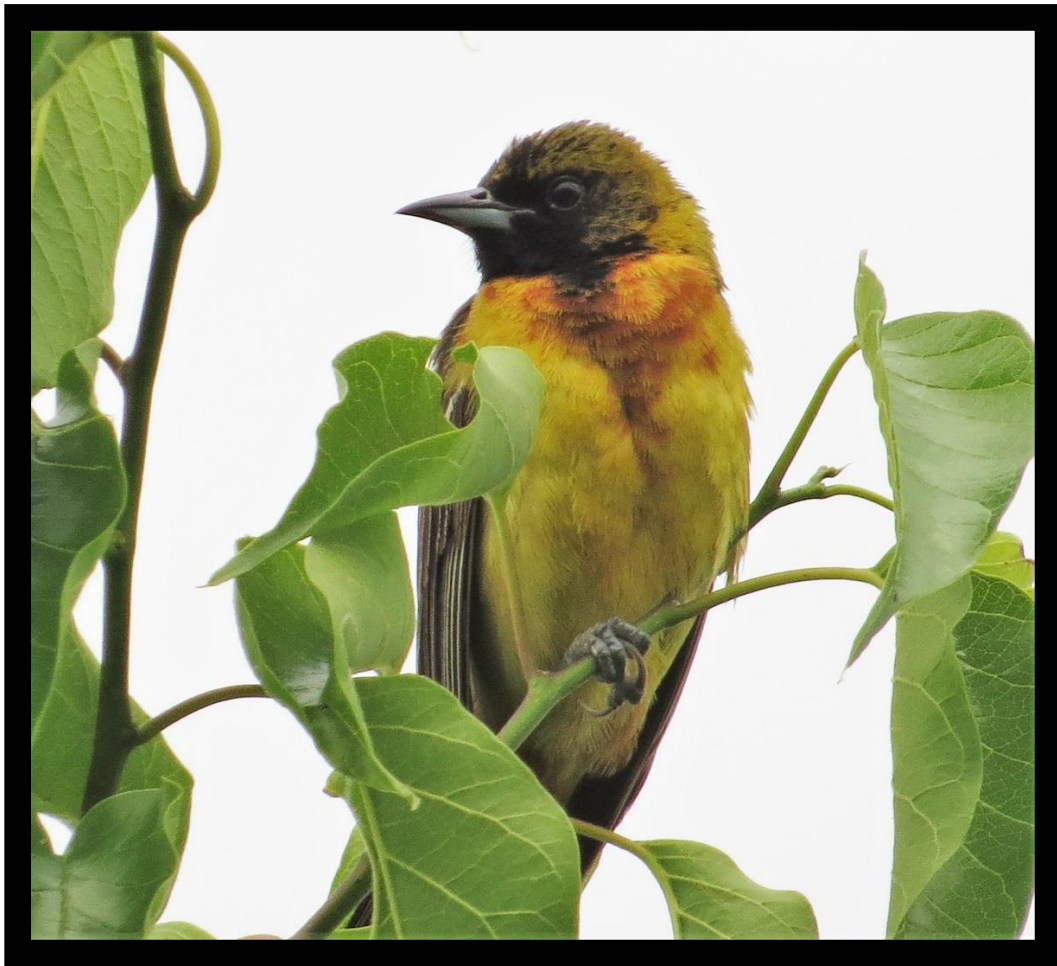
Denise Hoodock, Anne Neilson, Dawn Keplinger, Herb Myers, Kathy Kaeli, Judi Breeden, Stephani Moore, Tamera Helms, Debbie Witman, Randy Cline, Pamela Beverage, Tim Hulings, Martha Clymer, and Wayne Beaman for installing the new bird houses.

And an extra special thanks to Dawn Keplinger for purchasing two new bluebird boxes for replacement of two damaged boxes at the trail.

Your continued assistance and faithful support are greatly appreciated!

Coming Soon! The RBC Bird Seed Sale!

Watch for more information on our annual fundraiser through email and on the website. Don’t miss this opportunity to purchase fresh seed and our ever-popular homemade suet cakes!



Orchard Oriole – Friendly City Trail, June 24, 2023

Photo credit: Greg Moyers



Alder Flycatcher – FR 539 Hone Quarry Ridge Road – June 11, 2023

Photo credit: Greg Moyers

Rockingham Bird Club
9 Louise Drive
Bridgewater, VA 22812



PRESIDENT: Mike Donaldson

VICE PRESIDENT: PROGRAMS – Kathy Byers

VICE PRESIDENT: FIELD TRIPS – Diane Lepkowski

SECRETARY: VACANT

TREASURER: Audrey Shenk

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Andrew Troyer, Herb Myers

GOLDFINCH GAZETTE – Denise Hoodock

HISTORIAN: Art Fovargue

EMAIL: info@rockinghambirdclub.com

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

