

RBC President Mike Donaldson: Call to Order: The in-person September meeting of RBC will please come to order. (Time: 7:03 pm) at the Park View Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall.

There being no objections, they dispensed with the reading of the minutes. A copy is available on our website.

Old Business:

- None

New members/visitors:

- Karen Seward moved all the way from southern Georgia to McGaheysville in June. She is excited to learn where some of the local birding spots are. Mike Donaldson asked her to share with the club about the astonishing number of warblers she had identified at her prior home in Georgia. She clocked 31 different species on the 40 acre property. In 2020, she saw it for sale and it seemed like the perfect place to hunker down during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was an old pine plantation so she was able to have a home built and made trails on the property.
- James and Chelsa Shank are new members and had never visited a meeting before. They heard about Club from some of their friends who are members so decided to join. James said that Chelsa is a bit more of a birder than he is and enjoys looking at the different species on their farm in Mt. Crawford.
- Caroline Woo and her partner, who was unable to attend, are new to the area and excited to participate in Club. She is a writer and he is a professor at JMU.
- Amanda Gray is a previous member who hadn't renewed last year but is renewing again this year. Amanda is excited to continue seeing more birds and learning more like she had as a member.

Recent Bird Sightings:

- Tim Hulings heard reports of a Black-crowned Night Heron at a slightly unusual spot - a drainage pond at Oakdale Park in Bridgewater.
- Kathy Byers reported seeing hundreds of Common Nighthawks migrating when she was at her home near Hillandale. She said that Karen and Annie Shank also saw this from their home near Hone Quarry, specifically noting that Everett was very excited to witness it.

Reports from Executive Committee:

Mike Donaldson (President):

- Mike had two announcements to share. First, he reported that this should be a fun and special year for the Club as we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Club's founding. He mentioned that more news regarding anniversary updates will be shared later on in the meeting.

- He also announced that the same members of the Club's Executive Committee are returning this year. They comprise a friendly and helpful team, and it's nice to have the continuity going into this year. The Committee met over the summer on August 13. The discussion mainly involved planning for this Club year and discussing potential changes to our Club constitution and by-laws. These potential changes consist primarily of clarifying some language and of codifying the Executive Committee's decision to give the Members-at-large voting rights on the Committee. This remains a work in progress, and any changes would need to be approved by a vote of Club members. The minutes of our Executive Committee meeting are available upon request.

Kathy Byers (Vice President of Programs):

- Kathy started by sharing her excitement to have Dixie Sommers there as the first presenter of the Club year. She then updated that every month is booked except February.
- There will be a field trip to the Wildlife Center of Virginia in Waynesboro on Saturday, October 12. It will focus on the bird residents and will involve walking on uneven ground. It is not designed for young children.
 - Signup sheets were provided on the back table. Alternatively, you can text Kathy.
 - There is a \$5 fee to participate in this trip.
 - It is open to non-members and visitors.
 - For anyone interested, the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch is nearby to visit on the way back.
- Kathy then announced that Seed Sale order forms should hopefully be ready next week. She had good news that seed prices have gone down. All proceeds go to the Club and the organizations and programs it helps support. The order due date is October 28 and November 16 is the pick up date.
- Kathy then provided information on the Club's anniversary plans and announced that there is a planning committee composed of Kathy Byers, Kathy Fovargue, and Denise Hoodock who are working to organize the various fun offerings throughout the year.
 - The usual end-of-year June potluck dinner will be a celebration for the anniversary and there will not be a presenter. Instead, they are working to invite VIPs to join the celebration and Diane Lepkowski will be running a slideshow with highlights throughout the years.
 - She also announced the official name of the 50th anniversary, "Goldfinch Jubilee." The name honors the club mascot, the American Goldfinch, as well as highlights the 50th anniversary as a golden anniversary.
 - Denise is working on merch with a local company, Embracing Fire Designs, and has samples on the back table. The prices are ever so slightly marked up to provide the Club with some profit but are still incredibly reasonable. Orders will be available for pickup at meetings and the seed

sale or can be arranged otherwise as needed. If the merch order is received well, it may run again in January.

Diane Lepkowski (Vice President of Field Trips):

- After Kathy Byers was finished with her announcements, Mike Donaldson popped back over to the stand to give Diane Lepkowski a special introduction. He took a moment to recognize and congratulate Diane for completing her first year as President of the Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) and for being reelected at their annual meeting in May. It's quite an accomplishment, so he wanted to emphasize that we should all appreciate her service in furthering the interests of birding, bird science, and conservation. And at the same time, she provides us yet another reason to be proud of our Club. He concluded with a big round of applause for Diane.
- Diane then highlighted the evening's speaker, Dixie Sommers, and her prolific involvement with VSO as Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and Chair of the Finance Standing Committee. Dixie has also provided instrumental support for the Breeding Bird Atlas via coordinating fundraising and serving on a joint committee with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources and Virginia Tech on the final publication of the Breeding Bird Atlas. She encouraged everyone to keep an eye on the Breeding Bird Atlas.
- Diane put in a good word for the Seed Sale, reminding everyone that it is from this year's crop so it is fresh.
- She thanked Kathy Byers for putting together the field trip to the Wildlife Center and mentioned that stopping by the Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch afterwards is a good option but advised that anyone looking to stop by during peak migration should go sooner. Ideally, the third week of September will be best so roughly the 16th-22nd. Diane will be going Friday, September 20th so anyone interested in being there at the same time should reach out to her. She will probably drive there alone but encouraged others to carpool. She emphasized that if you are unable to go that day, it is worth trying to go a different day. The counters are friendly and great to talk to.
- She gave a recap of the Tuesday Hillandale walk. There were 11 people, 8 warblers, and 28 species.
- There will be a trip to Highland Retreat in October. She will get more information out about it. There will be limited space, no more than 15 people.

Allie Sawyer (Secretary):

- Mike recognized Allie

Audrey Shenk (Treasurer):

- Audrey reminded that membership renewal is cut off November 1st. Be sure to renew before then. Those who don't will lose newsletter access.

Art Fovargue (Club Historian):

- Unable to attend

Bill Benish (Christmas Bird Count Coordinator):

- Bill announced that while the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) dates have not been announced yet, we will be counting on the 1st Saturday of whatever dates are given. He threw out December 14 as the likely date. He gave a word of appreciation for Augusta Bird Club's Allen Lerner for establishing a pattern where they take Sundays to allow us Saturdays for the count. He also thanked past participants and leaders. He noted that if anyone lives in our count circle, they may participate at home. Reach out to Bill if curious about our circle, which is about 7.5 miles past Paul State Forest, or anything else CBC related.

Denise Hoodock (Newsletter Editor):

- Nothing to report
- Mike recognized her great work on the newsletter.

Members at Large:

- Recognized Herb Myers and Andrew Troyer
- Good people to talk to if you have questions or concerns

New Business/Announcements:

- With no new business or announcements, Mike adjourned the meeting to move into the presentation for the evening.

Meeting Adjourned @ 7:35 pm

Kathy Byers introduced the presentation on Birds of New Zealand by Dixie Sommers.

Total Participants: 52

Minutes recorder: Allie Sawyer

September 12, 2024