



Goldfinch Gazette

The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>

Volume L

Number 2

Oct 2024

DATE: Thursday, October 10, 2024

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: Park View Mennonite Church, Fellowship Hall

PROGRAM: **Bedlam on the Beach** presented by Pete Myers

Pete Myers of Crozet, VA, will present a program based on his recent article published in the magazine *Natural History*. Pete will share his research, personal observations and incredible photographs of avian life at Point Reyes National Seashore in California. We will learn about the life histories of a wide array of birds from Sanderlings to Long-billed Curlews and the Peregrine Falcons that hunt them.

Pete Myers is founder and chief scientist of Environmental Health Sciences, a non-profit organization that promotes public understanding of advances in scientific research on links between the environment and health. He was a research ornithologist at Philadelphia's Academy of Natural Sciences and a Senior VP for Science at National Audubon. Pete has spent hundreds of hours on the beaches of northern California, taking tens of thousands of pictures of the wild and wonderful birdlife there.

FIELD TRIPS – *Diane Lepkowski*

Hillandale Bird Walk, Tuesday, October 8: 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.

Field Trip Reminder: Virginia Wildlife Center Field Trip, Saturday, October 12

We will meet at the Virginia Wildlife Center, 1800 S Delphine Ave, Waynesboro, VA at 9:45am on Saturday, October 12. Please remember to bring \$5 per person in cash or a check made out to Rockingham Bird Club. Carpooling when possible is suggested. There are a few spots still available. Registration for this trip closes October 7. Contact Kathy Byers at kkbyers77@gmail.com or 540-820-6517

***Participants might want to stop by the [Rockfish Gap Hawk Watch](#) that day as well.

Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding: Tentative date – Friday November 8 (Sunday November 10, rain date.) *Sign-up required due to limited space.* Debbie Harrison will lead this evening trip, meeting in Broadway to carpool to Highland Retreat. Contact her at woodshar@aol.com to sign up (include your cell phone number, full name and name of any guest.) Rain or wind will cancel the trip.

TRIP REPORTS

September Hillandale Walk – *Kathy Byers*

Sadly, Tom Mizel needed to be out of town for this walk. His good humor and gentle leadership were missed, and this report will be considerably shorter than his wonderful recaps.

The change of season was in the air as the group gathered on a bright, cool morning. We did not have any visitors this trip, but we did enjoy the company of a few folks that aren't able to attend the walks as frequently as us retired folks! The group totaled eleven and a few wish-list birds were suggested. Randy Cline was unable to attend but requested an Olive-sided Flycatcher sighting. Of course, fall warblers were high on everyone's list.

As the group walked to the walnut grove and said their hello's, a few of the usual species started our lists. We were drawn to the calls of Carolina Chickadees, hoping they would have some migrants mixed in with their group. Warblers were not found in the walnut grove, but a flurry of them thrilled and frustrated us further up the hill. Thank goodness we had so many folks able to spot birds, and expert eyes to help us identify them. After seeing lots of underbellies, partial views and serious cases of "warbler neck," eight species of warblers were identified: Cape May, American Redstart, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Black Poll, Magnolia, Northern Parula and Chestnut-sided. Some of us marveled at the variations in the coloring of birds of the same species. Red-eyed Vireos and a Swainson's Thrush added interest to our lists.

The group decided to skip the bike path and return to the area of small trees along the creek. Eastern Wood-Peewees kept us busy trying to turn them into a species of flycatcher. At least one Empidonax was seen. We were treated to more looks at some of the warblers and the vultures were added to our list. The total for the day was twenty-eight species plus two additional taxa.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Herb Myers reported 6-10 **Common Nighthawks** at his place in Keezletown on Aug. 30.

Greg Moyers photographed an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at Hillandale Park on Sept. 1. Greg reported a **Blue-winged Warbler** at Paul State Forest later the same day. Greg reported another **Blue-winged Warbler** at Paul Forest on Sept. 8.

The Broadway Wastewater Plant has hosted several good birds in Sept. William Leigh reported two **Black Terns** and a **Bank Swallow** on Sept. 1, Greg Moyers reported three **Sanderlings** later the same day, Greg reported an early **American Black Duck** on Sept. 4, Cory Taylor had six **Sanderlings** and a **Baird's Sandpiper** on Sept. 6, and William Leigh reported three **Dowitchers** during the remnants of Hurricane Helene on Sept. 27. Additionally, a reddish-colored teal, originally reported by Matt Gin-gerich on Sept. 22, has garnered some interest and discussion. The bird is likely a **Blue-winged Teal** with unusual coloration.

Cory Taylor reported two **Sanderlings** at Turner Sod Farm south of Elkton on Sept. 2.

Diane Lepkowski has had several nice visitors to her yard and water feature near Harrisonburg, including **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, **Least Flycatcher**, and a bathing **Tennessee Warbler** on Sept. 4, **American Redstart**, **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, and bathing **Black-and-white Warbler** on Sept. 14,

Cape May Warbler and bathing **Scarlet Tanager** on Sept. 22, and **Cape May, Black-throated Green**, and **Bay-breasted Warbler** on Sept. 28.

Greg Moyers reported a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** at Hillandale Park on Sept. 6.

Greg Moyers, and Mike and Linda Donaldson spotted several warblers at Hillandale Park on Sept. 7, including **Bay-breasted, Nashville, Canada, Magnolia, Black-and-white, American Redstart**, and **Common Yellowthroat**.

Mike Smith has had some nice yard birds at his place near Elkton, including at least four **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** on Sept. 12, a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** on Sept. 13, a **Swainson's Thrush** on Sept. 18-19, and **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** and **Cape May Warbler** on Sept. 24.

Greg Moyers reported a **Philadelphia Vireo** at Hillandale Park on Sept. 14.

Cory Taylor reported two **American Golden-Plovers** on Keller Rd west of Dayton on Sept. 15. The following day, Janelle Donaldson found a **Lark Sparrow** at the same location. Several birders were able to see and photograph both birds.

Bill Benish and Robyn Puffenbarger had a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** at their place in Verona on Sept. 16.

Karen Shank reported an adult **Golden Eagle** at the Shank's place west of Bridgewater on Sept. 16.

Greg Moyes reported a **Philadelphia Vireo** at Switzer Dam on Sept. 21.

Mike Smith got a photo of a **Ruffed Grouse** during a close encounter near Simmons Gap in Shenandoah National Park on Sept. 23. Mike said the bird appeared to be begging for food and briefly followed them up the trail!

There was an eBird report of four **American Avocets** at Turner Sod Farm on Sept. 28.

William Leigh reported a juvenile, **Black-billed Cuckoo** at Crist Farm walking Trail in Bridgewater on Sept. 29.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Treasurer's Report – Audrey Shenk

Important! To keep your membership in good standing, renew before November 1. 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 November 2024 will be dropped from the Club roster and mailing lists. Also, for family memberships we are asking for the names of family members included in the household so that we can maintain a comprehensive list of all our members.

Dues are as follows: 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 7/1/2023 through 6/30/2024. Please contact Treasurer, Audrey Shenk (ajshenk@gmail.com) ASAP. This is a short-term commitment.

Annual Bird Seed Sale

Information and order forms were sent out at the end of September and online ordering is available at rockinghambirdclub.com. Please share with friends and family and support the club!

Order Due Date-Monday October 28, 2024

Pick-up Day-Saturday November 16, 2024. 9:00am-1:00pm

For more information or to volunteer to help on Pick-up Day contact Kathy Byers @ kkbyers77@gmail.com or 540-820-6517

Bird Seed Sale Director Needed

Kathy Byers, our First Vice President for Programs, has been directing the Club’s Bird Seed Sale for the past seven years. She has informed the Executive Committee that the 2024-2025 Club year will be the last year that she will oversee the Bird Seed Sale. Consequently, we are putting out an open call for someone to fill the role of directing the sale.

The sale is the Club’s primary fundraiser each year. Kathy has offered to serve as a mentor for someone during the fall 2024 Bird Seed Sale, so we are hoping to find a volunteer as soon as possible. The sale itself typically happens around the second Saturday in November, so soliciting orders from the public and ordering the seeds from the seed company happen significantly prior to November.

This is an important job, and our appreciation will be genuine and deep toward whoever steps up to fill this role. Please contact Kathy or anyone on the executive committee to express your interest in this position.

Christmas Bird Count – *Bill Benish, “VARC” Rockingham County Circle CBC Compiler*

Please mark your calendar for this year’s CBC date- **Saturday, December 14, 2024**. Several field party sector leaders have confirmed their plans to lead again. I’ll be firming up with the rest of the leaders soon. Some of these leaders will need helpers. Field participant contributions for this long-running Citizen Science effort may include spotting birds, recording count data and providing companionship support. We always hope to make space for anyone who wants to join, and I’ll keep a list of potential participants if all the spaces fill up.

Also, folks who live inside the circle may be able to help by counting birds at home as a “Feeder Watcher”. Please contact me at wcbenish@gmail.com if you may be able to join this coordinated effort or if you have any questions.

Bird Club Book Club

The BCBC will meet on Thursday, October 17 at 6:00 PM via Zoom to discuss the book *Pests: How Humans Create Animal Villains* by Bethany Brookshire. In November, we’ll discuss *Birding Under the Influence* by Dorian Anderson. If a particular month's book selection is of interest to you, feel free to join that month's discussion. We maintain a list of nature-related books and welcome suggestions for future reading. The BCBC usually meets on the third Thursday of each month via Zoom. If interested in joining us, email Elizabeth Ihle at elizaihle@gmail.com



Rose-breasted Grosbeak – Hillendale Park, September 16, 2024

Photo credit: Mike Donaldson



Yellow-billed Cuckoo – Hillendale Park, September 28, 2024
Photo credit: Greg Moyers



Bay-breasted Warbler – Harrisonburg, September 28, 2024
Photo credit: Diane Lepkowski



White-tailed Ptarmigan – Rocky Mountain National Park, September 20, 2024
Photo credit: Herb Myers



Ruby-throated Hummingbird – Keezletown, September 30, 2024
Photo credit: Herb Myers

Rockingham Bird Club
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PRESIDENT: Mike Donaldson

VICE PRESIDENT: PROGRAMS – Kathy Byers

VICE PRESIDENT: FIELD TRIPS – Diane Lepkowski

SECRETARY: Allie Sawyer

TREASURER: Audrey Shenk

MEMBERS AT LARGE: Andrew Troyer, Herb Myers

GOLDFINCH GAZETTE – Denise Hoodock

HISTORIAN: Art Fovargue

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

