

Rockingham Bird Club Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: 12/12/2024

RBC President Mike Donaldson: Call to Order: The in-person December meeting of RBC will please come to order (7:05pm) 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:

- Dean Williams, who lives in Bergton, decided to visit.
- Joy and Jim Miller just moved from Cincinnati, Ohio so decided to visit as they settle into the area.

Recent Bird Sightings:

- Art Fovargue has a bird bath in his and Kathy Fovargue's yard in Harrisonburg that is quite popular with American Robins and Cedar Waxwings, especially when it's dry. Usually there will be 3 or 4 Cedar Waxwings with the robins but this particular sighting had a flock of 20 or so come in to enjoy the popular bird bath.
- While canoeing at Lake Shenandoah, Eva Getman spotted a Belted Kingfisher not only dive to snatch a fish but then beat the fish on a branch for about half an hour before enjoying its catch.
- John Mast reported a Double-crested Cormorant soaking in the sun at Lake Shenandoah while it also had a healthy meal of a Black Crappie. A member of the department of wildlife was there and helped identify the fish and provided other information for those, like John, who were interested.
- Herb Myers took a moment to sing the praises of the suet cakes.

Reports from Executive Committee:

Mike Donaldson (President):

- Mike Donaldson did not have anything new to report but wanted to take a second to thank Kathy Byers for running another very successful Bird Seed Sale. Kathy put in a lot of time and effort and overcame some last-minute issues to make the pickup day run seamlessly. He also thanked the folks who volunteered to help with the seed pickup, not only for their hard work on that day, but for their good-natured camaraderie while everyone worked together to distribute the orders. He then initiated a round of applause for Kathy Byers and the Bird Seed Sale volunteers.

Kathy Byers (Vice President of Programs):

- Kathy Byers began her report with a preview of the upcoming presentations: Katie Fallon on Cerulean Warblers in January and Bruce Beehler on songbird migration in February. Kathy brought in his book, “North on the Wing,” which details his trek from the Mississippi Delta to Ontario in pursuit of migrating wood warblers and other songbirds.
- Kathy then expressed her gratitude to everyone who ordered seed and those who helped with pickup day. She appreciated everyone’s patience in working through glitches and loved how fun and hardworking the volunteer crew was. She also thanked Audrey Shenk for not only her talent with numbers but also her ability to seamlessly foresee and solve problems. Kathy then asked all of the volunteers to stand up for a brief round of applause. She then thanked Annie Shank for the over 300 suet cakes she helped provide.
 - Kathy notified everyone that there were still some small bags of seed available for purchase, Nyjer, and a 20lb bag of gourmet seed. The small bags were on the back table for display and people can let Kathy know if they are interested in any of the other selections.
- Kathy gave an update on the Goldfinch Jubilee Merch. She apologized for the poor function of the water bottles that some got and announced that there are replacements in the back. She summarized that while there were benefits to the merch run, there were also some issues. The club might look to do another round of merch in the spring with a different supplier.

Diane Lepkowski (Vice President of Field Trips):

- Diane Lepkowski was unable to attend so Mike gave two field trip reminders on her behalf. Tom Mizell will be leading a bonus field trip to look for the last birds of fall which will be on Friday, December 20 at 8:30 am at shelter 12 of Hillandale Park.
- In January, the monthly Hillandale Park outing will be on Tuesday, January 7 at 8:30 am.

Allie Sawyer (Secretary):

- Mike Donaldson recognized Allie Sawyer

Audrey Shenk (Treasurer):

- Nothing to report

Art Fovargue (Club Historian):

- Art Fovargue pitched “Birds of Rockingham County” as being a great gift for the holidays and reminded members that we still have copies for sale.

Bill Benish (Christmas Bird Count Coordinator):

- With the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) just around the corner, he wanted to remind those counting that it will be cold. Expect around 22 degrees so please dress appropriately. He gave an advanced thank you to trip leaders, participants, and circle feeders. He reminded that anyone who wants to be a circle feeder should reach out to him, if they have not already, so he can confirm that the home is within our circle and share other relevant information. He then informed everyone that there were reports of a Barred Owl in our circle so counters should be aware of that and maybe will get lucky enough to confirm it on the 14th.
- He then moved into sharing a few statistics about past CBC years.
 - In 2017, the club had its highest species count of 82 with 37 field observers.
 - In 1962, there were 39 recorded species and only 5 observers.
 - This year should be a good year for Purple Finches. The current record in our circle is 184 in 1980.
- If anyone has questions about the CBC or are interested in seeing past records, reach out to Bill and he will happily point folks in helpful directions.

Denise Hoodock (Newsletter Editor):

- Mike Donaldson recognized Denise Hoodock's great work on the newsletter. She was unable to attend the meeting.

Members at Large:

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

New Business/Announcements:

- Joy Beaman highlighted various details and milestones of the Bluebird Trail this year.
 - Compared to 2023's 5 fledged bluebirds, 2024 had 11!
 - April 21 saw the first eggs be laid
 - May 24 saw the first fledgling
 - June 14 saw the last fledgling depart
 - Throughout this year, there were damaged and moved boxes.
 - Box 4 was missing so a new one got put up. It was later found in a ditch with brush on top
 - Box 8 was by the light posts and it had been smashed
 - She then thanked everyone who helped monitor.
- Anyone interested in helping with the Bluebird Trail should reach out to Joy Beaman. She requested that if previous people who have helped monitor are not able to this upcoming year to please let her know. At this point, she believes the previous year's monitors are all returning.

- Mike Donaldson had a lost and found announcement. A light green, Friendly City Food Co-op hat was found at the last club meeting. If the owner is trying to find it, Mike Donaldson will have it for them. In the meantime, it will have a nice life as a gardening hat.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:26pm.

Kathy Byers introduced Jennifer Westhoff on her presentation “Unforgettable Falconry”. Jennifer owns Raptor Hill Falconry in Stanley, Va where she uses applied behavior analysis to form strong bonds with her birds as an alternative to traditional falconry tactics. Kathy then gave a quick reminder that anyone who is struggling to hear should feel more than welcome to make that known by either verbal or nonverbal cues, by tapping Kathy on the shoulder, or however else they can comfortably indicate that.

Total Participants: 55

Minutes recorder: Allie Sawyer

Date of Meeting: December 12, 2024