



# Goldfinch Gazette

## The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com>  
**A Goldfinch Jubilee – 50 years**

Volume L

Number 7

Mar 2025

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DATE: Thursday, March 13, 2025

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: Park View Mennonite Church, Fellowship Hall

PROGRAM: *Wildlife Photography and Travel Stories* presented by Mike Roberts

Naturalist and wildlife photographer Mike Roberts will present an enlightening and lively program focusing on some of his favorite birds including Belted Kingfishers, Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds and Great Gray Owls. He will share some of his favorite images and stories from his travels across the country and hundreds of hours in the field photographing birds. Some good tips on bird photography will also be shared.

As an outdoor writer, Roberts is a regular contributor for several magazines, including *Virginia Wildlife*. Currently, he proudly serves as the camp naturalist for Thomas Road Outpost near Virginia's Peaks of Otter. He has presented programs to nearly half a million school children emphasizing the beauty and stewardship of our natural resources.

Audio Aides will be available for use. The church is also equipped for anyone using T-coil technology devices.

### **FIELD TRIPS – Diane Lepkowski**

**Hillandale Bird and Brunch Walk, Tuesday, March 11:** We will meet at Shelter 12 at 8:30 AM for a bit of birding. Then join us at Kathy's house (around 10:30 am) for coffee, bagels and more! Contact Tom Mizell at [ztomvaz@cs.com](mailto:ztomvaz@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. Kathy's address is 521 Ridge Rd. in Harrisonburg.

**Madison Run / Browns Gap Fire Road (Shenandoah National Park) & Ore Bank Rd, Woodcock Trip -- Wednesday evening, March 12, with Diane Lepkowski** – Join Diane under the nearly-full moon as we aim to find American Woodcock males displaying to impress the ladies! We'll meet along the Fire Road at 6:45 PM & probably then head north to a viewing spot on Ore Bank Rd. Drive on your own or let Diane know if you wish to connect with others for carpooling (20-minute drive from Harrisonburg.) Park along the beginning of the Fire Rd, an extension of Browns Gap Rd, just east of the Ore Bank Rd intersection, taking care not to block the road. This is at the foot of the mountain, east of Grottoes, just inside SNP. Please sign up with Diane at [dianelep1@yahoo.com](mailto:dianelep1@yahoo.com) if you plan to attend or have questions.

## **Madison Run / Browns Gap Fire Road (Shenandoah National Park), Saturday April 12, with**

**Greg Moyers** – Join Greg at 9:00 AM to seek some of our earliest returning warblers and more. This is a great spot to see Louisiana Waterthrushes and other early-returning birds such as Pine Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, and Black-and-white Warbler. Meet at the fire road at 9:00 AM. We should conclude around noon. This is a fairly easy walk, with a gentle incline, along Madison Run on a well-maintained gravel fire road. Expect about a 3.5-4-mile round trip. There are no restroom facilities. Please contact Greg at gwmoyers@msn.com or 434-3029 if you plan to attend or need directions.

## **TRIP REPORTS**

### **Bald Eagles at Kimsey Run** – *Randy Cline*

Six hardy souls showed up in wonderful downtown Broadway for the annual eagle watch in Kimsey Run Lake in West Virginia.

The first stop was at the J. W. Bare property just outside Broadway along the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. We saw two mature Bald Eagles, with one posing prominently atop a tall snag.

We proceeded to Kimsey Run Lake, Parker Hollow Lake and ended up at the veterinary hospital in Baker, WV. In total we saw 25 Bald Eagles, most immature. The total species for the day was 33. That number included Tree Swallows, Wild Turkeys and Ring-necked Ducks.

The temperature was 42 degrees and windy; we saw Nebraska fly by.

## **BIRD SIGHTINGS**

*(Editor's note: A HUGE shout-out and THANK YOU to Greg Moyers who compiles and submits the bird sightings for the newsletter each month.)*

February was a banner month for rare birds in the county. We had confirmed reports of two first-ever species in the county. Karen Seward reported one of the two birds, a **Western Tanager**, at a private residence in Broadway on Feb. 14. Karen was made aware of the bird by the homeowner, who described an unusual bird coming to suet. Karen was able to go and get photo confirmation.

The second new species was a **Crested Caracara**, which visited Matt Gingerich's property near Linville on Feb. 20. Matt reports that he was standing at the sink when he looked out and saw the **Caracara** land in a Mulberry tree. Matt and his family were able to watch and photograph the bird for around 10 minutes before it took off.

The Broadway Wastewater Plant has hosted a number of good birds over the past month. William Leigh reported 11 **Ring-billed Gulls**, two **Northern Pintails**, and a **Common Goldeneye** on Feb. 4. Greg Moyers reported five **Tundra Swans** on Feb. 5. As many as 17 **Tundra Swans** were reported in subsequent weeks. Matt Gingerich reported a female **Long-tailed Duck** and three **Horned Grebes** on Feb. 6. Cory Taylor reported three **Greater White-fronted Geese** and a **Greater Scaup** on Feb. 10 and a pair of **Snow Geese** on Feb. 13. As many as four **Greater White-fronted Geese** were reported in subsequent days. **Cackling Geese** have also been reported throughout the month.

Matt Gingerich reported a male **Long-tailed Duck** at Lake Terrace in Harrisonburg on Feb. 6, the same day that he later found the female **Long-tailed Duck** mentioned above! Alex Capaldi added a **Horned Grebe** at Lake Terrace the same day.

Greg Moyers reported four **Horned Grebes** at Lake Shenandoah and a **Canvasback** at Lake Campbell on Feb. 8.

Greg Moyers spotted two white geese with a large flock of **Canada Geese** as he drove by the pond on Oakwood Drive near Mt. Crawford on Feb. 11. Upon return, he was able to get photo confirmation of both a **Snow Goose** and a **Ross's Goose**.

Diane Lepkowski reports that a **White-throated Sparrow** banded on December 4, 2019, by Charles "Zig" Ziegenfus as a hatch-year bird, has continued to winter in her yard and was last seen on Mar 2.

Matt Gingerich was alerted to some unusual ducks on Lake Terrace on Feb. 21. Chris Lehman checked and reported five **Canvasbacks** and a **Lesser Scaup**.

Diane Lepkowski reported a **Cackling Goose** at Silver Lake on Feb. 22.

Greg Moyers reported a **Palm Warbler** on Cold Spring Rd near Timberville on Feb. 22.

Greg Moyers and Diane Lepkowski reported a pair of **Rusty Blackbirds** at Lake Shenandoah on Feb. 23.

The **Say's Phoebe** continues to be reported at the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction on Lumber Mill Rd as of March 2.

Kevin Shank reports that there's an active **Bald Eagle** nest along Coopers Mtn Rd west of Harrisonburg.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Volunteers sought for Nominating Committee – *Mike Donaldson***

The Club will be holding its annual elections this May, and it is the duty of the Executive Committee to name a Nominating Committee at the Club's March meeting. 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)
- Member-at-large (Members-at-large 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 Mike Donaldson at [mike.donaldson@outlook.com](mailto:mike.donaldson@outlook.com).

## **Bluebird Trail Leader Needed**

The Bluebird Trail that our Club monitors at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds needs a new leader (chairperson) as soon as possible. In addition to the responsibilities listed below, the leader (chairperson) can choose to serve on the Club's Executive Committee or choose not to, according to their preference. Please contact Mike Donaldson ([mike.donaldson@outlook.com](mailto:mike.donaldson@outlook.com)) if you are interested in serving our club in this capacity or if you have any questions.

The Leader (chairperson) is responsible for:

1. Overseeing monitoring of the Bluebird trail at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds.
2. Ensuring all items are provided in the monitor's bucket (a list of all items in the bucket is available).
3. Maintenance of the Bluebird boxes if or when damage is reported.
4. Maintaining the list of monitor names, phone numbers and email addresses.
5. Creating the calendar of the monitoring season and sending it to all monitors.
6. Summarizing yearly results and reporting to the club as well as to the Virginia Bluebird Society.

## **Bird Seed**

Kathy Byers has two 10 lb. bags of Nyjer for sale for \$25 each. They will be available for pick up at the meeting.

## **RBC 50 Years Ago – *Art Fovargue, club historian***

The second Rockingham Bird club newsletter led with another poem, this one by Robert Frost entitled Questioning Faces:

The winter owl banked just in time to pass  
And save herself from broken window glass,  
And her wings straining suddenly aspread  
Caught color from the last of evening red  
In a display of underdown and quill  
To glassed-in children at the window sill.

The March meeting was announced, the topic being “How Feathers Get Their Color” by Dr Howard Hamilton from UVa. (It would be interesting to fly back to listen to the talk and see how the science of feather color has possibly changed.)

It was noted that a letter was sent to the Virginia Society of Ornithology applying for status as a local chapter.

Lastly, a list of the 58 RBC charter members (37 memberships) was presented. This included current members Bob Eggleston, Clair Mellinger and recently deceased Charles Ziegenfus.

## **Christmas Bird Count: VARC CBC**

All our Christmas Bird Count participants should have received a count report summary from me by now. If you were not able to join the count effort and would like me to email you a copy, let me know at [wcbenish@gmail.com](mailto:wcbenish@gmail.com).

Bill Benish, VARC CBC Compiler

## Bird Club Book Club

The BCBC will meet on Thursday, March 20th at 6:00 PM via Zoom to discuss the first four chapters of *The Social Lives of Animals* by Ashley Ward. We plan to discuss the remaining chapters at our April meeting. If a particular month's book selection is of interest to you, feel free to attend 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](mailto:elizaihle@gmail.com)

## New Constitution and By-laws

A special committee has been working on an update and revision to the RBC Constitution and By-laws since spring 2023. After numerous changes, reviews and other improvements, the RBC Executive Committee voted to approve the latest draft and submit to the membership for adoption. A copy of this proposed Constitution and By-laws is included in this newsletter. Or you can view a digital version by following this link

<https://rockinghambirdclub.com/constitution-by-laws/>

to the RBC website. On this page you will find links to the proposed draft and to a marked-up copy where you can see the details of all the changes.

Our current Constitution and By-laws were adopted in November 2015. Since then, various concerns had been noted and possible updates suggested. I will try to briefly summarize the changes that have been made.

- 1) The primary need for revision was to clarify that the Member-at-large positions are voting members of the Executive Committee. This was unclear in our current version.
- 2) Some updates were made to bring wording and activities up to current practice. For example, we changed the statement that all “payments shall be made by check” by adding in “or bank transfer” and changing “chairman” to “chairperson”.
- 3) Numerous typo errors were corrected and changes made for consistency, such as when the “Club” was mentioned, the “C” is now always capitalized.
- 4) Definitions were added to the types of memberships. To ensure we are not in conflict with the Virginia State Corporation Commissions rules on non-stock corporation membership, this new version clarifies that all membership types are limited to one vote.
- 5) The basis for a quorum at Executive Committee meetings had been missing and so a section establishing one was added. Also, the quorum required for RBC membership votes was revised from one-third to one-fifth.
- 6) In addition to the listed Standing Committees of the RBC, a section was added for the formation of “Special committees”, that is, ad hoc committees with a special purpose.

It is our hope to have a vote on the new Constitution and By-laws at the April membership meeting. If anyone has questions regarding this, you can email me at [art.fovargue@gmail.com](mailto:art.fovargue@gmail.com).

Art Fovargue

# ROCKINGHAM BIRD CLUB CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

## CONSTITUTION

### *ARTICLE I (Name)*

- Section 1. The name of this organization is the Rockingham Bird Club (RBC) or hereafter "Club".
- Section 2. The Rockingham Bird Club is a local chapter of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, Inc.

### *ARTICLE II (Purpose)*

- Section 1. The purpose and object of this Club shall be to promote interest in the study of birds, and in the conservation of birds and other natural resources.

### *ARTICLE III (Membership & Dues)*

- Section 1. Membership is open to any person who is interested in promoting the purpose of this Club, upon the payment of dues required. All members in good standing have full voting privileges and may vote if present with the condition that all memberships may exercise only one vote.
- Section 2. Memberships are:
- Individual
  - Student: a Student member is a person enrolled full time in a secondary school or a school of higher education
  - Family: a family membership includes members of a family unit living in the same household
  - Lifetime: Lifetime memberships are conferred by the Executive Committee. Lifetime members pay no dues and are considered members in good standing.

### *ARTICLE IV (Officers)*

- Section 1. Officers of the Club shall be President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These officers shall be elected annually.
- Section 2. In addition to the above named officers, two Member-at-large positions shall be elected for a two year term. These positions shall be elected in alternate years. No Member-at-large shall be permitted to serve more than two

consecutive elected terms, however, there shall be no limit on the total number of terms served.

Section 3. The Executive Committee shall include all the officers cited in Article IV, Section 1, the Members-at-large, and the chairpersons of all standing committees cited in the By-laws, Article V, Section 2. The immediate past president shall be a member (ex-officio) of the Executive Committee for a period of one year. All members of the Executive Committee are voting members.

Section 4. Annual election of officers as listed in Article IV, Sections 1 and 2, shall be held at the May Club meeting. Officers elected at this meeting will take office in the ensuing fiscal year.

#### ***ARTICLE V (Meetings)***

Section 1. The Club shall schedule at least 9 meetings a year. The Club calendar shall open on September 1 and continue through June 30 of the following year. Additional Club meetings may be held as desired, either by vote of the Club or the Executive Committee. Any business that is specified for a given meeting that is in turn canceled, shall be carried out before or at the next scheduled meeting.

#### ***ARTICLE VI (Amendments)***

Section 1. The Constitution may be amended by a 2/3 majority of members voting, provided notice of the proposed amendment(s) has been furnished to all members two weeks prior to the meeting.

### **BY-LAWS**

#### ***ARTICLE I (Meetings)***

Section 1. Voting on business may be transacted at any meeting of the membership after confirming a quorum. One-fifth (1/5) of the Club voting memberships will constitute a quorum.

Section 2. All members in good standing shall be notified of all meetings of the Club.

#### ***ARTICLE II (Dues)***

Section 1. The dues of the Club shall be determined annually. All dues of the membership are on the Club fiscal year basis, and will not be pro-rated. Dues are payable in advance of the first meeting in September. The Club fiscal year will be July 1 through June 30.

Section 2. Members who have unpaid dues as of November 1<sup>st</sup>, of the current year, will be dropped from the Club roster of members in good standing.

### ***ARTICLE III (Duties of Officers)***

Section 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Club and of the Executive Committee, may call meetings of the Executive Committee at any time and call meetings of the Club with the approval of the Executive Committee. The President shall appoint the chairpersons of all standing and special committees.

Section 2. The First Vice President shall be in charge of programs and activities, except field trips. The First Vice President shall serve as chairperson of the Program Committee and will preside at the meetings when the President is absent or otherwise unable to act.

Section 3. The Second Vice President shall be in charge of all field trips and give a report of such at each monthly meeting.

Section 4. The Secretary shall keep a record of the minutes of the Club meetings and of the Executive Committee, and shall keep up-to-date copies of the Constitution and By-laws, as well as write such letters as may be necessary to conduct Club business.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall receive, collect, and account for all monies of the Club and shall expend funds at the direction of the Executive Committee. All Club payments shall be made by check or bank transfer. The Treasurer shall prepare a roster of members in good standing and send this roster to the Newsletter Editor. The Club account shall be presented for audit once each year. The Treasurer is also a member of the Ways and Means Committee. The Treasurer is responsible for making memorial gifts to the Massanutten Regional Library in honor of a deceased member in good standing or recently lapsed.

### ***ARTICLE IV (Duties of the Executive Committee)***

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall take the initiative in planning the general activities of the Club and determining policies.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall supervise the finances of the Club and authorize expenditures.

Section 3. The Executive Committee shall make adequate reports to the membership through the President.

Section 4. The Executive Committee shall meet a minimum of three (3) times per Club year.

Section 5. At a meeting of the Executive Committee, one-third of the committee members must be present to constitute a quorum in order to conduct business. A simple majority of votes cast is required to pass motions.



## ***ARTICLE V (Committees)***

- Section 1. The President may designate standing committees and special committees approved by the Executive Committee (see By-laws Article III, Section 1).
- Section 2. The standing committees may include:
1. Club Historian – the historian shall preserve Club records, such as newsletters, pictures of Club activities, and articles of local interest.
  2. Christmas Bird Count – the compiler shall plan and direct the Christmas Bird Count each winter.
  3. Breeding Bird Census – the compiler shall plan and direct this study.
  4. Ways and Means – the chairperson shall organize all fundraising projects for the Club.
  5. Bird Records – the chairperson shall compile verified bird sightings made by members. This shall include the Hawk migration counts.
  6. Newsletter Editor – the Newsletter Editor shall be responsible for the publication of the Club newsletter for each month the Club is in session. The newsletter should be distributed to the membership 1 week prior to each meeting.
  7. Communications – the chairperson shall be responsible for the publication and/or revisions of any check-list, books, etc., that the Executive Committee may deem necessary.
  8. Bluebird Monitoring – the chairperson shall be responsible for overseeing monitoring of Bluebird trails established by the Club. The chairperson shall also be responsible for summarizing yearly results and reporting to the Club, as well as to the Virginia Bluebird Society.
- Section 3. Special committees are formed to carry out specific tasks and go out of existence when the task is completed.

## ***ARTICLE VI (Annual Elections)***

- Section 1. At the March Club meeting, the President will announce the chairperson of the Nominating Committee. This chairperson will form the Nominating Committee by selecting other Club members. No current officer whose office is up for election may serve on the Nominating Committee. It will be the duty of the Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of one nominee for each office described in Article IV, Section 1 of the Constitution, plus one of the two Member-at-large positions (see Constitution Article IV, Section 2). This committee shall present a report to the membership at the May meeting. Nominees will be selected from the roster of members in good standing.

- Section 2. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the meeting, provided each person whose name is placed in nomination shall, prior to voting, signify consent to serve if elected.
- Section 3. Nominees receiving a majority of votes cast shall be declared elected and shall serve their term as described in Article IV of the Constitution.
- Section 4. Vacancies on the staff of officers, including Members-at-large, may be filled by appointment by the Executive Committee for the unexpired term only.

***ARTICLE VII (Amendments)***

- Section 1. The By-laws may be amended by a majority of members voting, providing notice of the proposed amendment(s) has been furnished to all members two weeks prior to the meeting.

***ARTICLE VIII (Parliamentary Authority)***

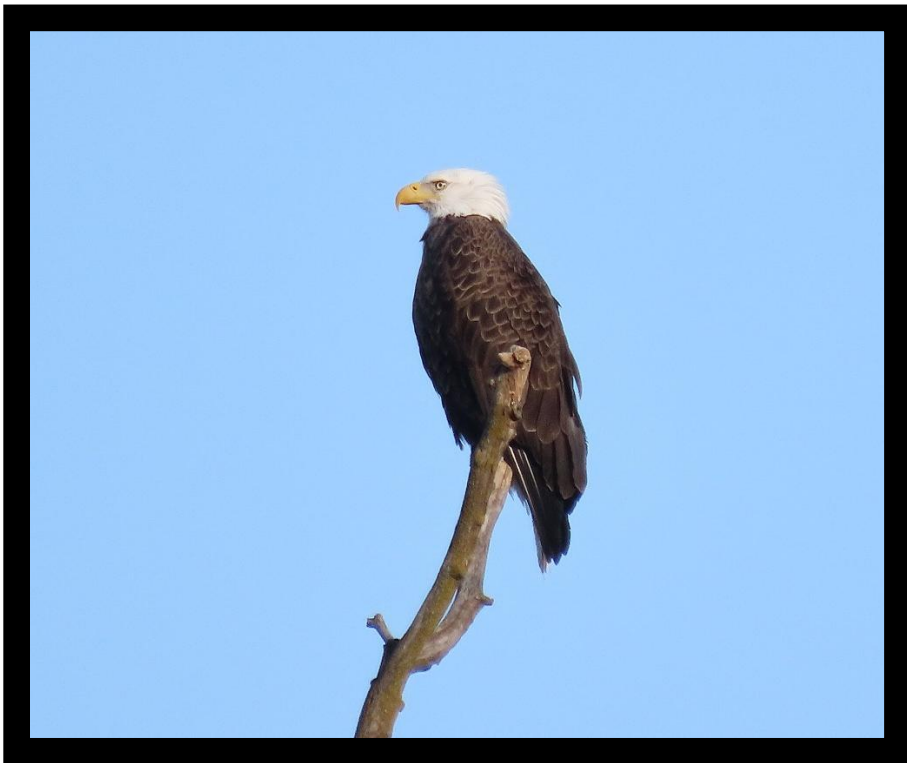
- Section 1. Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall be the parliamentary authority for the Club.

***ARTICLE IX (Dissolution)***

- Section 1. In the event of dissolution of this Club, no member, officer, or individual shall be entitled to a share in the dissolution of any of the assets and all assets shall be distributed for their stated purposes or to scientific, educational or other organizations with like purposes.



Rusty Blackbird – Lake Shenandoah, February 23, 2025  
Photo credit: Greg Moyers



Bald Eagle – Near Broadway, Virginia, March 1, 2025  
Photo credit: Mike Donaldson

Rockingham Bird Club  
9 Louise Drive  
Bridgewater, VA 22812



**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>**

