

Rockingham Bird Club Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: 3/13/2025

RBC President Mike Donaldson: Call to Order: The in-person March meeting of RBC will please come to order [7:01] at the Park View Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall. Mike introduced himself as the Club president and thanked everyone for being there.

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

New members/visitors:

- Kate Komorous and Zachary Peters moved to the area from Charleston, SC and are new members. They are interested in birds and looking for things to do.
- Nathan and Heather recently moved from Richmond, Va. Heather works at White Oak Lavender Farm.
- Darlene Coleman is part of the Augusta County Bird Club and was excited to visit for this month's meeting.
- Dick and Jean Shaeffer just moved to VMRC so visited since it is close by and they're looking for new activities in the area.
- Merv and Mary Brandiwick visited due to interest in the speaker.
- Katelyn Dean is from Broadway, Va and works for the Appalachian Conservation Corps so visited due to her interest in all things outdoors.
- Susan Warren visited with a friend.
- Rose Wells moved from DC to Bridgewater Retirement Community
- Doug and Julie Chisbar love birds so wanted to visit.
- Kathy Strickler visited around 10 years ago when she was in the area and came to visit again.

Recent Bird Sightings:

- Julie Longenecker was excited to report her first Red-winged Blackbird of the season.
- Jay Landis reported a Red-winged Blackbird, 3 Fox Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks.
- Tim Hulings noted that 5 Bluebird boxes have been placed around Bridgewater Retirement Community that are being monitored.
- Kate Komorous reported Common Mergansers in Bridgewater.
- Randy Cline reported a Western Tanager in Broadway.
- Henry Bowser noted that EMU club engineers constructed 15 Bluebird boxes.
- Kathy Byers shared that Mike Donaldson has a knack for finding rare, visiting birds. Two years ago he spotted a Sora, earning him a golden feather from Kathy. This year he spotted a Say's Phoebe, earning yet another golden feather from her.
- Susan Warren reported a Pileated Woodpecker and Cooper's Hawk.

Reports from Executive Committee:

Mike Donaldson (President):

- Mike thanked Randy Cline for stepping up to supervise the nest box monitors for the Club's Bluebird Trail at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds this spring. He also thanked all the nest box monitors. The Club appreciates their time and effort on that. If anyone is interested in helping, they can reach-out to Randy Cline.
- We now have a need for someone to take over handling the name tags we've been using at our meetings. This would involve keeping them organized and updated, bringing them to each meeting, and helping distribute and then collect them at each meeting. We very much appreciate Joy and Wayne Beaman for handling the name tags for the last couple of years. Please contact Mike Donaldson if you are able to serve in that role. You can always reach him, as well as other Club officials, via the "Contact us" email on the home page of the Club's website.
- We have the annual Club election coming up in May, and Mike hasn't heard from anyone regarding helping with the Nominating Committee. If you would like to help set the slate of nominees for the annual club election in May, please see Mike at the end of tonight's meeting or contact him as soon as possible.
- Lastly, Mike had a quick update on the activities of the Executive Committee.
 - The committee met on January 13, and they voted to approve revisions to the Club's Constitution and By-Laws and also voted on the list of organizations the Club would donate to this year.
 - The committee then met again on February 17 to catch up on some paperwork issues.
 - The committee's next meeting will be in May. Executive Committee meeting minutes are available upon request.

Kathy Byers (Vice President of Programs):

- Kathy Byers had a few program related announcements. She announced a small change for the Club's April meeting. Unfortunately, Clare Nielsen, the daughter of our very own Anne Nielsen, from the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is no longer available. Fortunately, another member of their staff is available. David Wiedenfeld, a Senior Conservation Scientist with ABC, will give us an overview of the important work the organization does and tell us about new research on bird habitats in North America.
- In May, ornithologist Bruce Beehler, author of "North on the Wing," will recount the highlights of his more than five months in the field in search of Godwits and other shorebirds.
- In June, we will celebrate our Goldfinch Jubilee with a carry-in dinner. Kathy reminded everyone that this is a Nut-free Facility. We hope to make this

celebration a reunion of sorts, so please help us spread the word. Maybe even offer to drive an older member that hasn't been able to attend meetings recently.

- Kathy also announced that she has one 10lb bag of nyjer at the meeting for \$25 (she had two going into the meeting but one was sold).
- Kathy had a couple of field trip announcements on Diane Lepkowski's behalf. The April Hillandale Bird Walk is Tuesday, April 8 at Shelter 12 at 8:30 AM.
- On Wednesday, March 12 Diane led a Woodcock trip. The night was a success, Diane always enjoys showing folks birds that are new to them.
- On April 12 at 9am, Greg Moyers is leading a trip to Madison Run Fire Road. Potential species of note are Louisiana Waterthrush, Blue-headed Vireo, and Black-and-white Warbler. It will be about 3.5-4 miles of walking.
 - Mary asked if there was a map of some sort to assist getting there. Kathy Byers let her know that she wasn't sure of any physical map but will think on if there's a good way to collect physical copies of maps for trips and wondered if "Birds of Rockingham County Virginia" would have any maps of that area. She informed that the location is east of Grottoes.
 - Miranda Troyer chimed in and mentioned that she was confident that if Mary or someone reached out to Greg, he could get them a more specific address and assist with directions.
 - Kathy assured Mary that Club members can assist her with directions if she is wanting to join for that trip.

Diane Lepkowski (Vice President of Field Trips):

- Unable to attend

Allie Sawyer (Secretary):

- Mike recognized Allie

Audrey Shenk (Treasurer):

- No reports

Art Fovargue (Club Historian):

- Art Fovargue announced the revision to the Constitution and By-laws is complete and he's hoping for a vote in the April meeting. In the newsletter, there's a copy for review. We need a quorum of at least 1/3 of the membership so he encouraged members to attend that meeting.

- Art also asked for best bird memories in celebration of the 50th anniversary. The memories can vary from beauty to rarity to behavioral oddities and anything in between. Art shared a submission featuring a Red-shouldered Hawk as an example: “The hawk was sitting on my in-laws' fence eating worms. I did not realize that hawks ate worms, and it was hilarious.”
- Art is hoping for 100 submissions by the end of June. The Club website has a link for submissions and he brought printed forms to the meeting.

Bill Benish (Christmas Bird Count Coordinator):

- Unable to attend

Denise Hoodock (Newsletter Editor):

- Mike recognized her great work on the newsletter.

Members at Large:

- Mike Donaldson recognized Herb Myers and Andrew Troyer for their continued service as Members-at-Large.

New Business/Announcements:

- Hedy Reese wondered if anyone is encouraging folks to push legislatures to protect birds. Mike Donaldson responded that the Executive Committee is quite busy with administrative details in keeping the Club going so encouraged something of that nature to be a grass roots movement from Club membership. Kathy Byers added that many of the local to national organizations that the Club donates to have outlets supporting bird protection and legislature that supports conservation.

The formal portion of the meeting was adjourned at 7:30.

Kathy Byers introduced the speaker for the evening: naturalist and wildlife photographer, Mike Roberts. “Growing up in rural Bedford County, Virginia, Mike spent most of his free time rambling through fields and forests either catching insects or watching birds. As an adult, he was employed for 30 years in the nuclear fuel industry. After retiring, Mike was able to pursue his true passion for wildlife photography and teaching others about the great outdoors. Mike created an educational organization called Return to Nature and began traveling to elementary schools all across Virginia - including Rockingham County and Harrisonburg. Over the next 10 years it was his pleasure to conduct classroom programs for over 450,000 students and teachers. Mike has spent countless hours photographing wildlife across America, Canada and Africa. He is a regular contributor for several magazines including Virginia Wildlife and currently serves as the camp naturalist for Thomas Road Outpost near the Peaks of Otter. So please sit back and enjoy as Mike shares some of his fantastic photos and adventures.

Total Participants: 64

Minutes recorder: Allie Sawyer
Date of Meeting: 3/13/2025