

Rockingham Bird Club Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: 11/13/25

Program: Michael Hayslett, Ecology & Conservation of Virginia's Vernal Pool Wetlands

RBC President Mike Donaldson: Call to Order: The in-person November meeting of RBC will please come to order at 7pm 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.

New members/visitors:

- Panayotis Giannakouros is a Harrisonburg who visited and made an announcement about a local ecological issue.
- Caitlin was visiting from Virginia Beach.

Recent Bird Sightings:

- Mike Donaldson reported seeing Purple Finches eating new seed from the Club's seed sale at his bird feeder.
- Ken Ranck reported seeing an immature Bald Eagle feeding on a dead possum in his yard in Mt. Crawford.
- Henry Bowser noted that four Bald Eagles were seen by volunteers during the Club bird seed sale pickup.
- Guest: Two days ago, their trail cam captured a Blue Jay picking through the leaves in the house gutter.

Reports from Executive Committee:

Mike Donaldson (President):

- Mike thanked everyone for the highly successful bird seed sale and asked Cindy Smoker if she'd like to say anything about the sale.
- Cindy offered words of thanks for the volunteers, mentioned the seed looked great and everything ran smoothly.
- Mike thanked Kathy Byers for helping Cindy get acclimated to the role.

Kathy Byers (Vice President of Programs):

- The June meeting will have a carry-in dinner with a slide show in the background.
- Kathy invited people to send speaker ideas.
- Inclement weather policy is to follow Blue Ridge Community College. If classes are cancelled or delayed, the meeting will be cancelled.
- Doug Ruby will present at the December meeting about his big year.

Matt Gingerich (Vice President of Field Trips):

- Herb Myers led a field trip at Starry Meadows last week.

- The walk at Hillandale took place on November 11.
- Ben Spory and Chris Lehman are continuing the owl banding, and there will be an evening trip to the Saw-whet Owls on Nov. 19. Debbie Harrison is coordinating and doing this evening trip. They collect owls with the nets and band them. Check with Debbie if interested or for more information.
- Greg Moyers will lead a walk on December 6 at Lake Shenandoah.
- Big Flat Christmas Count (separate from the Club's count), in Shenandoah National Park, please see Matt Gingerich if you are interested in participating.

Allie Sawyer (Secretary):

- Mike recognized Allie

Audrey Shenk (Treasurer):

- No report

Art Fovargue (Club Historian):

- Art Fovargue compiled all of the Best Bird Memory submissions and they will be archived at the JMU special collections library and are available on the bird club website. Go to the main page, then click publications, and scroll down and you'll find the link. 35 submissions were provided. Barred Owl got the most hits with three submissions. The earliest was October 1981, and the most recent is March of 2025.
- Dan Getman offered thanks for the project, as a family discussion about their best birds and the sharing and remembering was very meaningful to them.

Bill Benish (Christmas Bird Count Coordinator):

- Saturday, December 20, will be the date of the count.
- Weather can be a factor, so an alternate date is January 3.
- We have 12 parties, maybe 13, going out separately. Bill Benish encouraged folks to consider being a feeder watcher if you live within the count circle.
- Bill invited people to sign up for the bird count.

Denise Hoodock (Newsletter Editor):

- Mike recognized her great work on the newsletter.

Members-at-Large:

- Mike recognized Herb Myers and Andrew Troyer. These are good people to talk to if you have any ideas, questions, or concerns, as a primary role of the Members-at-Large is to act as liaisons between Club members and the Executive Committee.
 - Herb is reaching the end of his term as a member-at-large, so there will be an opening at election time in May.

New Business/Announcements:

- Mike announced the next in-person Club meeting is Thursday, December 11 at this same time and location.

Meeting Adjourned @ 7:20pm

Kathy Byers introduced Mike Hayslett, presenting on the Ecology & Conservation of Virginia's Vernal Pool Wetlands.

Total Participants: 47

Minutes recorder: Linda Donaldson

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