

Rockingham Bird Club Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: 05/08/25

RBC President Mike Donaldson: Call to Order: The in-person May meeting of RBC will please come to order [7:01pm] at the Park View Mennonite Church Fireplace Room.

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

- Mike Donaldson began the meeting on a somber note, as he was sad to report that we have lost a Club member, Sarah Myers, who passed away on Tuesday evening. In addition to being a wonderful person and beloved community member, she was the wife of Herb Myers, who serves on our Executive Committee, and is midway through his second term as a Member- at- Large. And our hearts go out to Herb.
- Herb Myers then shared a few words. Birds are a real solace - he walked Madison Run and was never out of earshot of Red-eye Vireos and he watched a female Baltimore Oriole that was untwining a ribbon around a bush. He read a beautiful sentiment from Robyn Puffenbarger.

New members/visitors:

- Reese, from New York City, moved to the Valley about 18 months ago and found out how much he loves birds since the move and appreciates the land.
- Lori Yoder knows some people in the club and she's been meaning to attend for some time.

Recent Bird Sightings:

- At Hone Quarry, Jim Kaeli saw an Indigo Bunting from about 3 ft away and saw a Bald Eagle fly and land on a branch across the water.
- Anne Nielsen observed a pair of Black-crowned Night Herons in decoy trees before they go over to the nest in deciduous trees that are just coming out.
- Zachary Peters, while at Switzer Lake wandering near the boat ramp, saw 2 American Redstarts fighting and chasing each other. He was surprised by how small they were and at first thought they might have been black birds.
- Heather Brewer, while up in the mountains, saw a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher catch a caterpillar, flail it against a branch, beat it to death, and then swallow it whole.

Reports from Executive Committee:

Mike Donaldson (President):

- Mike Donaldson jumped into reading off the slate of nominees for Club officers:

“Mike Donaldson - President
 First Vice President for Programs- Kathy Byers
 Second Vice President for Field Trips- Matt Gingerich
 Secretary - Allie Sawyer
 Treasurer- Audrey Shenk
 Member at Large - Andrew Troyer

Thanks to all of the nominees for their willingness to serve, nominations are now in order. Are there any nominations for any of the other offices? Hearing no nominations, the nominations from the floor are now closed. In order to proceed, I need a motion to close.” **Jim Kaeli motioned to close the floor for nominations and Art Fovargue seconded the motion.** Mike then needed a motion to elect the slate of nominees as listed above. **Zachary Peters was first to motion with a second by Clair Mellinger.** Mike then requested a voice vote with a reminder that you must be a member to vote. Mike Donaldson, “**Ayes have it.** The slate for 2025-2026 is duly elected, congratulations.”

Kathy Byers (Vice President of Programs):

- Trip to the National Park- 19 people & 51 species and 10 warblers, gorgeous day, Kathy Byers applauded Tom Mizell for running it- it was great, but he couldn’t make it tonight.
- Meet at Hillandale park at 8:30am for monthly outing.
- There are two trips to Raptor Hill Falconry a day in July (weekday) & day in September (Saturday) that Kathy wants to be first come, first serve, but needs to be equitable for our members that don’t have internet access to receive their newsletter in paper. If you are a member who is interested in that but don’t have access to the internet, please touch base with Kathy Byers.
 - 12 people per trip and the falconry is located between Luray and Shenandoah. Craig had a “life-changing” experience. Jennifer was so impressed with the members and loved the club that she is giving us a cut rate for a large group. This won’t be a 1-on-1 experience so less pictures and not everyone will have a bird land on them. The current price or ball park is reasonable, but she doesn’t want to say yet, until she’s sure.
- The last Meeting on June 12th is the carry-in dinner upstairs in the Fellowship Hall. There will be door prizes, raffle of a lovely, fabulous...surprise, and more! More announcements to come, but you may want to bring a little money for the raffle.
 - If you know past members who haven’t been able to come to meetings, please offer to drive them/ reach out.

- This is a nut free facility so factor that into whatever you plan on bringing.

Diane Lepkowski / Matt Gingerich (Vice President of Field Trips):

- Unable to make it

Allie Sawyer (Secretary):

- Miranda Troyer filling in for Allie tonight

Audrey Shenk (Treasurer):

- Nothing to report

Art Fovargue (Club Historian):

- Art gave a reminder about the Best Bird project so we can get those archived to have a good selection of memories for people in the future to review. He assured people not to worry about the length of the writing and gave examples of what he's received so far: 24 words from his son-in-law, Randy Kline had 20, and Allie's was the longest at a few short paragraphs. We have 18 responses so far and responses don't have to be from a Club member, just from the last 50 years and in Rockingham County. Please go to the website→publications tab→ and how to submit it. There is also a paper form. Our goal is 100; Art joked that he might lock the doors until we hit our goal.
- Ann Nielsen asked "Will we have a history report of the last 50 years?" Art said there will be.

Bill Benish (Christmas Bird Count Coordinator):

- Nothing to report

Denise Hoodock (Newsletter Editor):

- Mike recognized her great work on the newsletter.

Members at Large:

- Mike recognized Herb Myers and Andrew Troyer
- Good people to talk to if you have questions or concerns
- Andrew Troyer recently took over name tags and went through the current member list to remove old name tags. If you didn't see yours in there today, we can get that sorted out.

New Business/Announcements:

- Next Club meeting is at 6:00 pm on June 12th, upstairs at the Fellowship Hall.

- Robin Puffenbarger did a talk last January on the Central Shenandoah Master Gardeners and is doing another from 9am-2pm at 20 E Gay Street. Come early.
- Raptor-Thon will be in Highland County to see the birds they can and are taking donations, ½ goes to Rockfish Gap and ½ goes to Humana data that holds the research.

Meeting Adjourned @ 7:27

Kathy Byers introduced the presentation on **In Search of Godwits** by Dr. Bruce Beehler.

Total Participants: 48

Minutes recorder: Miranda Troyer

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