



April Newsletter

Next meeting Monday
April 13th, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Please meet in the Chapel this month

Grandin Court Baptist Church
2660 Brambleton Ave SW. Roanoke, VA 24015

Before the meeting please join fellow club members at 5:30 p.m.
for dinner at the Brambleton Deli, 3655 Brambleton Ave.

Celebrating 58 Years
of Birding!
1957-2015

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Deadline for submissions to be included in the next RVBC newsletter are due by the 20th of the month preceding the next publication month. Thank you! Please send photos (in medium resolution or smaller) and submissions or suggestions to RVBC Newsletter Editor, Maureen Eiger at rvbcnews@cox.net

Hyperlinks have now been added. You can click on the underlined link and it should take you there. Use it for sending email or to get internet and website information. Visit our web page for past newsletters and current information at:
<http://www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com>

NEW! - Visit and "like" the Roanoke Valley Bird Club's Facebook page.

Attracting Birds with Water By Bob Schamerhorn



Bob Schamerhorn, a Virginia native, shares his stories and experiences when a small puddle of water was added to a backyard patio garden and then an amazing diversity of birds became attracted to it. Bob is a graphic artist for Infinity Graphics, a business which he started in 1996. The emergence of digital technology inspired his reconnection with nature photography. Since then, his images have won awards and appeared in numerous publications and websites. This informative multi-media program displays his stunning still photography, supplemented with audio and High Definition video. So come see how a little water can greatly improve both your backyard habitat and your backyard birding enjoyment. He will even show you how to build and install a simple, low-maintenance water feature all by yourself.

This month's meeting refreshments will be graciously provided by
Candy Andrzejewski and Linda Harrison

Thank you club members; Maxine Fraade, Mary Harshfield and Rita O'Brien for their contributions to the newsletter this month

A Bird Word –RATITES - Once used more technically, *ratite*, or *Ratitae*, is a loose covering term for a number of bird orders whose members possess what common feature? Hint- It has to do with why birds can or cannot fly. You may think penguins should belong to this order, but they don't. Answer is on page 3.

Field Trips

Field Trips Chairman, Linda Cory (540) 580- 5214

EAGLE ROCK & SALISBURY FURNACE, SATURDAY, APRIL 11th at 7:30 a.m.

Meet educator Bill Hunley (774-2397) for a special field trip to Salisbury Furnace in the Eagle Rock and James River area. We can expect to see waterfowl (especially wood ducks), warblers, such as the yellow-throated warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush and more. There is always a possibility for ospreys and bald eagles. Dating back to the mid 1800's, Salisbury Furnace is also a good location for wildflowers. We will also visit the confluence of the James and Craig Creek. Meet near the Bojangles at Botetourt Commons in Daleville off 220N.



WARBLER ROAD, SUNDAY, APRIL 26TH at 7:00 a.m.

Meet leaders Tim and Alyce Quinn (719-0109) near the Bojangles at Botetourt Commons in Daleville. We will bird a series of forest service roads between the Blue Ridge Parkway and Arcadia in search of warblers and other Neotropical migrants. This trip usually lasts into the afternoon so bring drinks, snacks and a lunch. Dress in layers and be prepared to carpool as pull-offs are limited. **Important:** we are going to bird from the top down, starting at the Sunset Field overlook on the Parkway; so if you're planning to catch up with the group along the route somewhere, take that into consideration

BIG SPRING DAY, SATURDAY, MAY 2ND between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. Contact Eunice Hudgins (389-4056 or uvaau@aol.com) to sign up.

Spring birding in our area of Virginia is awesome. The Neotropical migrants are making their way north to their preferred breeding ground. Some species only remain in our area for a couple of weeks while others stay around to raise families. Late April through mid-May is the best time to enjoy these birds who are showing their bright summer plumages while setting up territories and pairing up to breed. All of this makes them more active, very vocal and more easily observed. Every spring at the peak of this migration, the Roanoke Valley Bird Club teams up with the Lynchburg Bird Club to do a census of birds in our area. We call it Big Spring Day.

The count is centered around the Peaks of Otter and covers specific territories within a 7-1/2 mile radius of the Peaks. Small groups are assigned to each of twelve territories the RVBC covers. Most areas require very little or no walking. You drive the territory, stopping when you see or hear activity or walking short distances to observe and listen. For those who like to walk, a couple of territories require hiking for several hours. If you are a beginning birder, we encourage you to join us. Your eyes and ears can help locate birds and there will be someone nearby to help identify what you are seeing. Observing birds in their natural habitat is a fun way to learn.

The count is held as scheduled regardless of the weather.

Most groups get started between 7:00 and 8:00 AM. At noon, all participants gather at Harvey's Knob (milepost 92.2 on the Blue Ridge Parkway) for lunch and a tally of what has been seen. Bring a chair and your own food and drink.

Last year we met at Harvey's Knob for the tally because the Peaks of Otter Picnic area was closed. People seemed to like this beautiful scenic spot, so let's try it again.

Jim Elder (from the Lynchburg Bird Club) will collect the census forms, compile them and send each participant a spread sheet of what was seen. After lunch some groups go back out and continue birding unfinished territory, search for a bird seen by another group or just call it a day and go home. Please join us. It's a great time to mingle and get acquainted with fellow birders, discover new birding spots and maybe see a bird you have never seen before.



LITTLE SPRING DAY at FINCA ALOHA (AKA CHIGGER HOLLER) SUNDAY, MAY 3rd at 7:30 a.m.

If you're not birded out from Big Spring Day, join Tim and Alyce Quinn (719-0109) at their house at 681 Edgewood Farm Lane, Wirtz, VA 24184 the following day for a morning of looking for spring migrants and resident birds. They have a variety of habitats including woodland trails, a pond, scrub and open fields, and their property list includes over 130 species. Wear sturdy shoes as the footing is rather uneven. If you don't want to hike, there's a big deck and lots of chairs where you can relax and do some stationary birding. If you'd like to stay for lunch, bring a dish to share. Anyone who would like to carpool from Roanoke can meet at Tanglewood Mall under the big sign at 6:45 a.m. The Quinns' address is 681 Edgewood Farm Lane, Wirtz, VA 24184. (Keep an eye out for Eurasian Collared-Doves as you pass the Burnt Chimney Elementary School on your way.)

Events, Projects and Club News



VSO 2015 ANNUAL MEETING from May 8 – 10th 2015 at Wintergreen Resort, featuring keynote speaker Scott Weidensaul, a Pulitzer Prize nominee, whose books cover a spectrum of topics from bird migration, to birding history, extinct species, and early American history. Share with us a spectacular mountain-top setting and Blue Ridge avian specialties that will make the 2015 VSO Annual Meeting a can't-miss experience. Field trips along the ridges as well as down into the Rockfish and Shenandoah Valleys should yield unbeatable natural beauty ... not to mention an excellent list and great company of fellow birders. **NOTE -Please reserve your own lodging at Wintergreen by contacting their Group Reservations Department at 1-800-611-6888 by April 8th.** Your VSO meeting registration must be received by April 30, 2015 to

guarantee reservations for catered meals. For your VSO registration, go to http://www.virginiabirds.net/VSO_PDFs/VSO-Annual-Meeting-2015-Registration-form.pdf For more information contact John Spahr by email at feldspahr@gmail.com or by phone at 540-471-6193

SAVING THE AMERICAN KESTREL - contributed by RVBC member, Mary Harshfield

Those of you who went on the Highland County birding trip may have noticed some large bird boxes placed up on tall poles or trees in open fields (on Route 640). An article in the Spring Guide of *"The Recorder"* (a weekly newspaper serving Highland and Bath County) explains that the boxes are part of a project to save the American kestrel whose population has declined in recent years. Patti Reum, one of four members of the "Kestrel Strike Force", says "loss of grassland habitat and nesting holes, as well as competition for nesting cavities from raccoons, starlings, owls, etc. are major reasons for the birds' decline." Reum also discusses how pesticides and insecticides are a huge threat to the American kestrel as well as all other birds. Kestrels feed on mice, voles, spiders, moths, snakes, frogs, lizards, and sometimes, small birds. The "Kestrel Strike Force" has distributed 50 nesting boxes in central and western Virginia; their goal is to distribute 100 more boxes throughout Virginia to people who can provide an appropriate habitat. Dan Bieker of Charlottesville has been building the boxes. The best habitat for kestrel boxes is open space of two-to-four acres with short ground cover and scattered trees. Reum says "landowners can help kestrels and many other species by preserving brush areas, keeping old fencerows in place, leaving dead trees standing and encouraging native plants. Pasture and meadows free of pesticides and insecticides are ideal hunting grounds for the American kestrel."



Earth Day



CELEBRATE EARTH DAY & PARTY FOR THE PLANET ON SATURDAY, APRIL 25TH AT MILL MOUNTAIN ZOO. The Roanoke Valley Bird Club has been asked to participate in this celebration of Earth Day. If you can help set up our display, meet and greet people or just have a good time as an RVBC volunteer and help out at our booth for us at this event, please let any of the RVBC Board members know. Or you can email rvbcnews@cox.net Come on out and help celebrate Earth Day at the zoo! The event is from 11 to 4pm and set up is from 9 to 10 a.m. More information will be given out at the April RBVC meeting.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER
Jennifer Walker and she also adopted a bluebird!



BIRD WORD ANSWER - A RATITE is any of a diverse group of large, flightless birds (most of them now extinct) that unlike other flightless birds have no keel on their sternum - hence their name which comes from the Latin (*rat*) for raft. They are characterized by a flat, raft-like sternum rather than the keeled sternum, designed to support flight muscles which is typical of most birds. Ratites do not have the proper shaped keel to anchor their wing muscles so they could not fly even if they were to develop suitable wings. Examples are Emus, Ostriches and Rheas.

Sightings

MENTIONED BY RVBC MEMBERS ATTENDING THE MARCH MEETING

- ✓ Sid and MaryLou Barritt were at the Roanoke County Library on Friday evening and saw 60-70 Red-winged blackbirds, as well as the American Woodcock.
- ✓ Joe Riggins saw five Common Redpolls.
- ✓ Per Liz Williams, a big flock of Pine Siskins stripped a neighbor's tree of some sort of berry/catkin, then immediately moved on. Joyce Hart had a few Pine Siskins at her feeders last week. The Wefels report still having Pine Siskins.
- ✓ Pam and Elly Wefel also saw 150-200 gull-like birds flying. The Wefels also saw a large number of Redheads at the Botetourt County Club Golf Course.
- ✓ Robin Jordan saw a Kingfisher from the Greenway in Salem.
- ✓ Martha Pillow also saw a Common Redpoll.
- ✓ Barry Whitt and Joanne Derryberry were able to spot all three mergansers: the Common, Hooded, and Red-breasted!
- ✓ Dick Hendrix had a brief sighting of a Red-headed Woodpecker in his yard in February.

NOTABLE FIELD TRIP SIGHTINGS

Starkey Wetlands Boardwalk, on Mar 7, from 5:30 PM - 6:50 PM

Roanoke Valley Bird Club Woodcock walk lead by Linda Cory. Total of 12 species. Highlights were: American Woodcocks, Eastern Bluebirds and Red-winged Blackbirds. A special treat was when a Great Horned Owl flew over our heads at dusk while we were listening for the woodcock

Greenfield--Botetourt Center on Mar 21 from 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM

field trip led by Linda Cory and Kent Davis Total of 46 species. Over 20 people attended. Highlights were; Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Hooded and Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Ducks, Wilson's Snipe, Eastern Phoebe, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Tree Swallows and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Also Tom Johnson reported seeing American Pipits.

Bird Tip - by Rita O'Brien

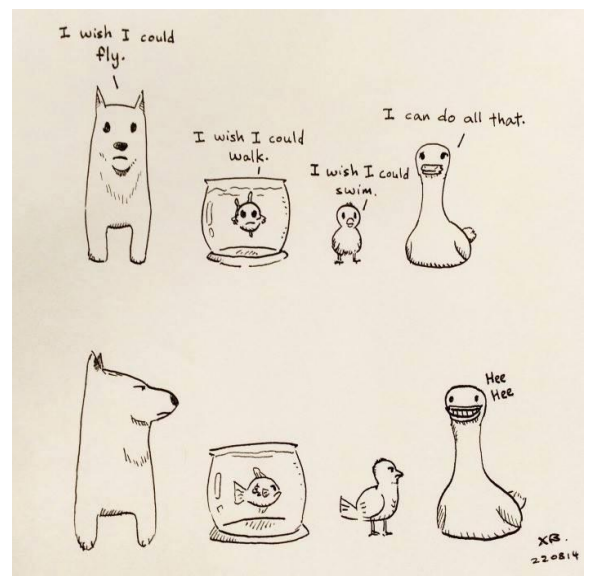
ANOTHER WAY TO FEED CRUSHED EGGHELLS TO BIRDS AND ADD CALCIUM TO THEIR DIET FOR BREEDING SEASON. You can also crush the toasted eggshells so that they are a very fine powder and place them in a plastic container (just slightly larger than a suet cake.) Place your suet cake in the ground up eggshells in the container, close it then shake the container, coating the suet cake. Think Shake 'N Bake coatings. Press any leftover shells into the suet. Put these extra calcium fortified suet cakes out for your birds. Rita says her birds love them!

Trending around the Internet: Look at Cornell Lab eNews. It has a page that has colorful quizzes and rare footage; you'll get to know male birds that use feathers, songs, dance moves, and even design skills to woo mates. Discover the upper limits of extravagance and the reasons for it. Click on [All About Fancy Males.](#)

If you would like to see something strange but true about an Amazonian bird chick that mimics being a toxic caterpillar to avoid being eaten go to -

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2015-02/uocp-hip022315.php

If you find a good web site or article to share, send a link to rvbcnews@cox.net



Meet a RVBC Member

Mary Harshfield

We now have a new format for **Meet a Member**. Our new RVBC Roving Reporter Maxine Fraade will be interviewing a different member of the club for the newsletter each month. Enjoy!



So let's meet Mary Harshfield who has just taken over co-chairing the newly revived RVBC Youth Bird Club. Mary got into birding one summer in college while living at a field biology station deep in the woods run by the University of Tennessee. For three intense weeks students went out each day learning the science of the bird as well as other natural sciences which she says, "Opened my eyes up to a whole new part of being outside: what was there."

Although brought up in a suburb of Chicago, Mary's family dates back 9 or 10 generations to the mid-1700's in Highland County, Virginia. The family farm is still located there and it was the family connection that brought her back to our area after graduation.

Mary has always been interested in the outdoors and is also a Master Naturalist, member of the Appalachian Trail Club (where she met her husband, Jimbo on a hike) the Wildflower Society and is a Master Food Volunteer - an initiative of VA Cooperative Extension offering outreach on food preparation, nutrition, and healthy living, (I can personally attest that her personally-developed recipe for no-knead bread is fabulous!). Additionally, she has taught herself to bird by ear because, as she notes, when you are out hiking, people just don't want to stop to look for birds.

Mary and Jimbo also serve as hosts for Servas International and Legacy International, introducing international travelers to our region in the interest of helping to promote understanding and goodwill among people of different backgrounds, cultures and nationalities through hospitality and cultural interaction. – By Maxine Fraade

2015 RAPTOR COUNT RESULTS - The February 14 Raptor Count results are in! Not the best weather, not very many hawks but 5 groups went out and tried!! **Judy & John Loope are the big winners** with 4 Bald Eagles! Eunice Hudgins and her daughter found the only Sharpie of the day. Come join in the fun next year!

TEAM A - Laurie & Scott Spangler - Botetourt & Bedford Counties

TEAM B - Eunice Hudgins & Sharlyn Vaughan - Salem & Botetourt

TEAM C - John & Judy Loope - Rt 311, Rt 18, I64 & I81 North

TEAM D - Alyce & Tim Quinn - Burnt Chimney, Boones Mill

TEAM E - Bill & Anne Tucker - Franklin, Pittsylvania and Bedford Counties, around SML

SPECIES	TEAM A	TEAM B	TEAM C	TEAM D	TEAM E	Totals
TURKEY VULTURE	36	42	56	29	118	281
BLACK VULTURE	29	5	76	92	93	295
RED-TAILED HAWK	10	2	11	1	2	26
AMERICAN KESTREL	5	5		2	1	13
RAVEN	1				2	3
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK		1				1
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK	1	1		2		4
BALD EAGLE	1		4		2	7
UNIDENTIFIED RAPTOR	1	2	3	1		7
TOTAL BIRDS	84	58	150	127	218	637
TOTAL POINTS	281	172	370	169	260	1252

*** RECEIVED 20 BONUS POINTS FOR PEAK VULTURE COUNTS



Roanoke Valley Bird Club

C/o Eleanor Dye
P.O. Box 74
Vinton, Virginia 24179

2015 Roanoke Valley Bird Club Membership Application Form

Please print

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

ST: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Memberships expire on August 31 each year

Annual Dues are as follows:

- Individual \$12
- Family \$20
- Student \$7
- Sustaining \$30
- Adopt a Bluebird \$15

Additional Contribution \$ _____

Total Submitted _____

Make check payable to
Roanoke Valley Bird Club
Mail To: Roanoke Valley Bird Club
C/o Eleanor Dye
P.O. Box 74
Vinton, VA 24179-0074