



# April '19 Newsletter

Celebrating 62 Years of Birding  
1957-2019

## NEXT MEETING

Monday, April 8th at 7PM

**Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs Building  
3640 Colonial Avenue Roanoke, VA 24018**

Join fellow club members for dinner at 5:30pm at the Brambleton Deli, 3655 Brambleton Ave.

**Mountain Songbirds and More! An Update on the VA Breeding Bird Atlas**

Presented by Ashley Peele, PhD.

At the close of each atlasing season, VABBA2 director Dr. Ashley Peele takes on the herculean task of reviewing the year's observations. Digging into stats for montane songbirds, she noticed something intriguing: Probable breeding activity and confirmations for species like Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Canada Warbler, Least Flycatcher and at least six other warblers—all expected to show declines—had instead risen dramatically since the first VA BBA. Please join her to hear more of this and other exciting preliminary results of the current VA BBA project, as well how you can get more involved in the final two years of this project.

Dr. Peele is an avian ecologist, who became interested in studying wildlife biology after a childhood spent running around the biodiverse lakes and swamps of Florida. As a college freshman at Ohio Wesleyan University, her mentor introduced her to the world of Field Ornithology through his honors seminar on Avian Microbiology. This experience set her on a lifelong path of study focused on avian ecology and conservation. After college, Dr. Peele worked on wildlife research projects in many parts of the world, including studies of owls in the desert Southwest, reptile/amphibian population in the FL Everglades, and songbird research in Maryland, Delaware, and Louisiana. In 2015, she completed her PhD in Avian Ecology, after spending five years studying population dynamics of Neotropical migratory songbirds in Jamaica. She currently is the State Director of the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas Project and a research associate at Virginia Tech's Conservation Management Institute, focusing on citizen science and the human dimensions of wildlife conservation. Her current research projects include using citizen science data to assess long-term changes in breeding bird populations of VA and better understanding the role wildlife watchers for the future of natural resources.

## CLUB NEWS

### **Bird Club Volunteer Opportunity:**

Mill Mountain Zoo Party for the Planet, Saturday, April 27th, 11-4pm. This is the zoo's Earth Day celebration with family related activities surrounding our environment. Our club's mission statement includes conservation of habitat for wild bird species. We will have information to handout and an activity or two for our visitors. Contact Chairperson, Mary Harshfield [mary.harsh803@gmail.com](mailto:mary.harsh803@gmail.com)

### **VSO Annual Meeting May 3-5, 2019**

You won't want to miss this VSO Annual Meeting from May 3-5, 2019. It will be at Mountain Lake Lodge in Pembroke, Virginia. This hotel was named 2018 Hotel of the Year by the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging and Travel Association. For more information about the hotel see [www.mtnlakelodge.com](http://www.mtnlakelodge.com). Not only will you enjoy your stay and the meals at the hotel, but the birding will be fantastic. There will be plenty of interesting field trips to choose from so that you can look for some of those high-elevation species you don't see in other parts of Virginia. Would you like to see a Ruffed Grouse, Black-billed Cuckoo, Least Flycatcher, Golden-winged Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, or Rose-breasted Grosbeak? Then plan to join us for the 2019 VSO Annual Meeting. For details and registration link visit <https://www.virginiabirds.org/events/annual-meeting> . The deadline for signing up is April 14th.

### **Earth Day Roanoke returns to Grandin Village for its 30th Anniversary!**

**Saturday, April 20th from 10am-4pm**  
**FREE admission!**

The Bird Club has been invited by our friends at the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society to share a booth at Earth Day. Please volunteer to take a short shift at our table anytime between 10-4 to talk about the bird club and offer handouts to those interested. Then walk around the festival and enjoy the other exhibits.

We'll be joining many other local groups that love and want to protect our earth, including environmental groups, electric vehicles, composting, renewable energy, recycling, community gardens, Roanoke City Parks and Rec., local artists, and other community service groups.

Location: Grandin Road, the entire block of the the Co-op and Grandin Theater  
Sign up to Volunteer : Linda Harrison: [lindaharrison29@hotmail.com](mailto:lindaharrison29@hotmail.com) 540-343-2783



**BIG SPRING DAY  
SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2019**

Late April through mid-May in the mountains of Virginia is about as good as it gets for spring birding. Migrating birds are heading north from the tropics to northern breeding grounds. Birds that spend the entire year here are setting up territories and pairing up to breed which makes them more active, vocal, and easier to observe in their bright spring plumages.

This will be the 49th Big Spring Day Bird Count co-hosted by the Lynchburg and Roanoke Valley Bird Clubs. We will be out that day, rain or shine, to count birds in a 15-mile diameter circle centered on the Big Spring in the Peaks of Otter picnic area. Parties will begin birding shortly after dawn (or even before if you are very energetic) and meet at noon at the Peaks of Otter picnic area for the tally-up. If the Picnic Area is still closed, we will have lunch and tally-up at the amphitheater. Bring your picnic lunch and something to drink. We usually find around 120 species.

Big Spring Day is always a fun count, occurring at the peak of migration and during the loveliest part of Spring. Small groups are assigned to each of the territories. While a couple areas require hiking, most of the areas require very little or no walking (driving the territory and stopping when you see activity or walking short distances from your car to observe and listen). We will include at least one experienced birder with every team. This is a great opportunity for beginning birders – your eyes and ears can help locating birds while other can assist in the identification. If you'd like to participate, contact Barry Whitt at 540-309-4353 or email at [tti-hwb@gmail.com](mailto:tti-hwb@gmail.com). Come on out and learn about bird counts and enjoy the beautiful Spring birds.

Jim Elder will distribute the final report by email to all participants. New participants, please give your email address to your team leader to submit with the team tallies. Let Jim know if you need a paper copy and he will send a report directly to you. If you participated on Big Spring Day last year, your team leader will contact you in April to establish a meeting time and place.

Barry Whitt (Roanoke coordinator) Jim Elder (compiler and Lynchburg coordinator)



## **UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS**

(For any additional information please contact Linda Cory at 540-580-5214 or RVBC2015@outlook.com)

### **APRIL 6th, SAT., 8:00 AM - LOCHER TRACT AND ARCADIA**

Meet Bill Hunley (467-3477) at Botetourt Commons for this morning field trip to Locher Tract, located in the Jefferson National Forest. This is a managed wildlife habitat that contains woods, open fields, a beaver pond and good views of the James River. We can expect a good variety of birds, including early migrant warblers, Wood Duck and Fox Sparrow. Locher Tract is near Natural Bridge Station in Rockbridge County. There will be 2 miles of level walking. We will then visit the Arcadia area and, if time permits, nearby Solitude Swamp. This field trip includes some of our club's favorite birding spots. Wear water proof shoes.

Directions: On I-81, take exit 150B and follow signs to 220N. Go 3/4 miles and take a left on Kingston Rd into the Botetourt Commons shopping center. We will meet in the Bojangles parking area.

### **APRIL 10th, WED., 8:00 AM – SECOND WEDNESDAY BIRD WALK AT GREENFIELD**

Join co-leaders Barry Whitt (309-4353) and Annie Downing (520-6027) for a bird walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield. We will walk around Greenfield Lake in search for waterfowl and songbirds. The walk will be mostly flat walking for about 2 miles. We will also cover the grassy area overlooking the lake or the trail down to the lower pond. Bring your spotting scopes! For those that want to stay afterwards, we can lunch at Ballast Point Brewery overlooking the lake. This trip will be repeated on May 8th.

Directions: Take Exit 150B on I-81 and follow signs to Route 220N. Go about 4 miles and take a left at the entrance to the Greenfield Education and Training Center, across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation. Park in the second lot on the right.

### **APRIL 20th, SAT., 8AM – WHISPERING PINES AND PLUNKETT LAKE**

Meet Kent Davis (355-6388) and Linda Cory (580-5214) at the Orange Market in Hanging Rock. From there we will be driving to Whispering Pines Park in Roanoke County. This park has been known to produce the trifecta of nuthatches: white-throated, red-breasted and brown-headed. We will also visit some nearby ponds including Plunkett Lake, so bring your scopes.

Directions: The Orange Market is located at the intersection of Rt 311 and Rt 419 (1823 Thompson Memorial Drive) Salem, VA.

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS cont.

### **APRIL 28th, SUN., 7:30AM – WARBLER ROAD**

Meet Tim and Alyce Quinn (312-6844) at Botetourt Commons for one of our favorite trips to see warblers. 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.

Directions: On I-81, take exit 150B and follow signs to 220N. Go 3/4 miles and take a left on Kingston Rd into the Botetourt Commons shopping center. We will meet in the Bojangles parking area.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

March 13th—2nd Wednesday Walk at Greenfield. 22 club members joined our leaders to see 43 species. Highlights were Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, both Greater and Lesser Scaup, Buffleheads, Pied-billed Grebes and good numbers of Ring-necked Ducks and Gadwalls. Other birds were Killdeer, Northern Harrier, Eastern Meadowlarks, a number of Tree Swallows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Belted Kingfisher. The grand finale bird was an Osprey that circled above the group as we were leaving.

March 23rd—The Woodcock walk was a success with 18 birdwatchers observing male woodcock's doing their flight display. It was hard to tell how many there were because it was thought that the males may have been returning to the spot same spot over and over again. However the official count is 4. Of course the females were nearby but not spotted. It was a beautiful evening and a real treat.





Yellow Warbler



Black-throated Blue Warbler



White-throated Sparrow



Eastern Towhee



Black-throated Green Warbler



Ovenbird



Chestnut-sided Warbler



Gray Catbird



Red-eyed Vireo



Blue-winged Warbler



Indigo Bunting



Carolina Wren

## Bird Sound Mnemonics

Songs and Calls of Eastern North American Birds



Roanoke Valley Bird Club  
 c/o Eleanor Dye  
 PO Box 74  
 Vinton, VA 24179



**2018—2019 Roanoke Valley Bird Club Membership Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships expire August 31st.

<b>Annual Dues</b>	
Individual \$12	_____
Family \$20	_____
Student \$7	_____
Sustaining \$30	_____
Adopt a Bluebird \$15	_____
Additional Contribution	_____
<b>Total Payment</b>	_____
<p>Make check payable to the          Roanoke Valley Bird Club          c/o Eleanor Dye          Box 74          Vinton, VA 24179</p>	