



# February '17 Newsletter

Celebrating 60 Years of Birding  
1957-2017

## NEXT MEETING

Monday, February 13th at 7PM  
Grandin Court Baptist Church  
2660 Brambleton Ave. Roanoke, VA 24015

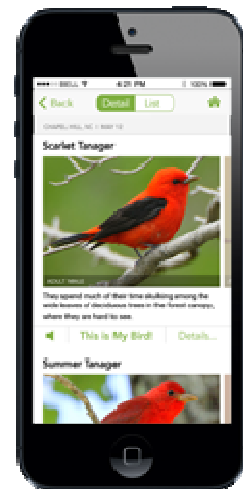
(Join fellow club members for dinner at 5:30PM at Brambleton Deli; 3655 Brambleton Ave.)

## Birding with eBird & Other Useful Technology

Presented by Rexanne Bruno

You have probably heard of eBird, but are you using it? Rexanne Bruno, formerly of Lynchburg but now living in Virginia Beach, will share the latest information on eBird and how to use it. If you aren't using eBird, you'll be surprised at how it can enhance your birding experiences. If you already use eBird, you may learn about some features that you aren't using. Plus she'll tell us about other some other online resources that she uses that are useful to birders.

Rexanne Bruno began birding while living in New Jersey over 30 years ago. She has birded in Virginia for almost the same length of time - at first while visiting relatives in the Tidewater area and eventually moving to Lynchburg in the late 1990s. She was a long-time editor of the Lynchburg Bird Club newsletter, past president of the Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) and serves on the Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (VABBA2) Steering Committee. She has lead field trips for the VSO, the Lynchburg Bird Club, and the Virginia Beach Winter Wildlife Festival.



Reminder – We are still having our Holiday Christmas Card Bird Count at this meeting since we were snowed out in January. Please bring your total number of birds counted on your received cards to the February meeting. There will be a first and second place prize! You don't have to list species (how can we when card makers use artistic license), but just a total number. If you are unable to attend the January meeting, send your number total with a friend or email RVBC2015@outlook.com.

## **SIGHTINGS**

### **Christmas Bird Count Results:**

Each year the Roanoke Valley Bird Club participates in the annual Christmas Bird Count with results being reported to the Audubon Society. Our club covers a circle with an epicenter of downtown Roanoke, a Fincastle CBC count and a Peaks of Otter count.



### **Roanoke – December 17th**

20 participants in 11 parties found 66 species . Highlights were: Tim Quinn found a light phase Rough-legged Hawk and a Merlin along Thirlane Road near Dodson Exterminators. He also found a Bonaparte's Gull at Carvin's Cove. Barry Kinzie found two Great Egrets and three Snow Geese at Murray's pond. Liz Williams and Eunice Hudgins saw a total of three Yellow-crowned Night-herons on the Roanoke River in Salem.

### **Fincastle - December 18th**

Although fewer participants covered this area, the results were rewarding. The Greenfield area covered by Thomas Gray turned up fifty-five species with the total species count at 80. A lot of good bird finds and some rare include 2 Bald Eagles, a Red-headed Woodpecker, a Merlin, a Snow Goose, a Sandhill Crane, and an Indigo Bunting .



### **Peaks Count - December 20th**

Thanks to all the participants: Kent Davis (compiler) Butch Kelly, Fred Cramer, Rupert Cutler, Anne and Bill Tucker, Carol and Barry Whitt, Toni Pepin, Tom and Pat Johnson, Susan Kidd, Eunice Hudgins, Joanne Derryberry, Norris Ford, Bob Epperson and Liz Williams. This count is above 1500 feet so we do not have a lot of birds to count but a fun time was had by all. A couple of unusual birds were found for this count including a Canada Goose found by Eunice, Susan and Liz and 2 more by Joanne and Toni (all were flyover birds). One Bald Eagle was found by Tom and Pat. We had a total of 34 species, 1135 total individuals, seen by 6 parties.

### **Greenfield on January 21**

Roanoke Valley Bird Club field trip led by Barry Whitt and Kent Davis 34 species; Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet

### **Dr. Carol Croy in Blacksburg**

The female rufous hummingbird we have had since November 6 successfully made it through the recent bout of snow and severe temperatures. Attached are a few photos of her winter survival strategies in action. We have a crossvine growing up one wall of our house, that is sheltered and receives southeastern winter sun exposure. During the snow and wind event, she mostly stayed in the cross vine and adjacent cup-plant vegetation we left intact for the winter. This kept her out of the snow, and most of the wind. We did not observe her roosting there at night. After the snowfall and during the sub 20 degree days, she stayed in or near the cross vine during the day, using the side of the house and southern sun exposure as a warmer microclimate. As soon as the wind died down, and temps got back into the upper teens, she expanded her daytime activity area out to more of her normal pattern. And when the temperatures rose back above about 25 degrees, we could observe her actively hawking for small flying insects, even with snow on the ground. We have found the two hummingbird feeders we have out do not need supplemental heat to stay unfrozen until temperatures fall below about 22 degrees. Now that the temperatures have significantly moderated, we rarely observe her in the crossvine and her use of the feeders has declined as well. She is spending most of her time in dense shrubs behind our house and downslope from the prevailing winds, hawking flying insects. As of today, she has been with us for 72 days.



## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

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

### **February 3rd-5th VSO Field Trip Outer Banks**

Make plans to join us for the VSO's Winter field trip to the Outer Banks of North Carolina February 3-5, 2017! There is no fee to attend, however; please email ASAP tomerandlee@gmail.com with the names of participants in your party, including telephone number and email address. The week-end itinerary will then be sent via email to you a few days before the trip. Birding trips will be leaving from the Comfort Inn South Oceanfront in Nags Head, 8031 Old Oregon Inlet Road, Nags Head, NC 27959; Phone: 252-441-6315. The VSO cannot guarantee a room for you, so call the motel ASAP. The hotel has a huge deck off the second floor, which offers great beach-viewing opportunities and the 7th floor bayside rooms offer a panoramic view of the bay (no balconies, though). For more details, visit <http://www.virginiabirds.org/events/field-trip-announcements/20170203-outer-banks> or call 804-824-4958. Some RVBC members will be there since we are a chapter of the Virginia Society of Ornithology and this trip is a long, long standing tradition.

### **February 8th, 9AM Second Wednesday Bird Walk at Greenfield**

Join co-leaders Barry Whitt (309-4353) and Kent Davis (355-6388) at 9AM 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 1 1/2 miles. There are benches along the trail for "birding from the bench". Other walking at the property MAY be limited to construction including the grassy area overlooking the lake or the trail down to the lower pond. Bring your spotting scopes! This trip will be repeated on March 8th. Meet at the second parking lot at Greenfield on the right across the road from the lake. Greenfield is located on Route 220 in Botetourt County. Directions: Take Exit 150B on I81 and then a right onto Route 11 for a quarter mile. Take a right onto Route 220N. Go 3.8 miles and take a left at the entrance to the Greenfield Education and Training Center, across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation.

### **Highland County Trip – Saturday, February 18th, 7:30AM**

Meet Fred Cramer (890-8026) and Rupert Cutler (580-7652) for this exciting day of birding in Highland County and surrounds. The target bird is the golden eagle which has been seen on this trip in the past. We should also see bald eagles and a good variety of waterfowl. We will start by traveling north on 220, bird the Blue Grass area near Monterey and bird Lake Moomaw and surrounds. This is a full day event, so please bring lunch, snacks and drinks. Wear warm clothes and sturdy shoes. We will carpool (the fewer the cars, the better) from Bojangles at Botetourt Commons (on 220N from I-81 exit 150B). VDOT reports that exit 150B may be closed due to construction, so follow detour signs or exit 150A and do a U-turn.

### **Pond Hopping – Sunday, February 26th, 9AM**

Meet leaders Tim and Alyce Quinn (312-6844) at Botetourt Commons (Bojangles) to carpool to various ponds in the area. Dress warmly and bring a scope if you have one. Expect easy walking and we should return by noon. Please note that this is a Sunday walk. Also exit 150B may be closed due to construction so follow detour signs or exit 150A and do a U-turn.

## **Woodcock Walk on Bent Mountain - Saturday, March 11th, 5:30PM**

Meet Robin Austin (929-5222) at the Bent Mountain Community Center for an evening walk of birding and woodcock watching. We will visit the boardwalk at the community center (formerly Bent Mountain Elementary school) and then walk the surrounding area. Walking is level, but wear water proof shoes just in case. The group will then carpool to a nearby area to observe the woodcocks that usually start their courtship flight at sunset. The Community Center is at 10148 Tinsley Lane, Bent Mountain VA 24059.

## **Back Creek/Blue Ridge Parkway Bird Walk - Saturday, March 18, 8:00AM**

Club member Gary Oberlender (529-7566) will host a bird walk on the wooded mountainside behind his home which borders the Blue Ridge Parkway just below the Roanoke Valley Overlook. Habitats will include pine and mixed hardwood forests, open fields, and wooded creek bottoms. Terrain will vary and at times will climb steeply but we will walk slowly and listen carefully for early spring birds. Wear good walking shoes and layered clothing appropriate to the weather forecast and bring water and a snack. The walk will conclude around noon. From Cave Spring Corner (419/Electric Road and US 221/Bent Mountain Road), take US 221 south 5 miles towards Bent Mountain. Turn left on Old Mill Road (Rt. 752). Cross the creek and bear left. Look for the meeting area at Lawrence Lane (second gravel drive on the left) to park.

## **CLUB NEWS**

RVBC members, Barry Kinzie and Kent Davis participated in a Florida Christmas Bird Count and were featured in the local newspaper there.

### **Fog Fouls Christmas Bird Count**

By Lois Swoboda The Apalachicola Times

Bad weather plagued this year's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in the Florida Panhandle and Apalachicola was not spared. Pea soup fog hindered efforts at long distance observation and limited the use of boats for transportation. On Dec. 28, 28 volunteers traveled 190 miles by foot, car and boat to count 7,294 birds, down more than 3000 from 10,581 birds observed last year. In 2015, 150 species were spotted in the Apalachicola area; a record number of species observed during the CBC here. The average number of species observed here is 134, and birders working this year reported a very respectable 130 species in spite of uncooperative weather. Sprague's pipits were observed at the Apalachicola Regional Airport again this year. This is the easternmost point where the small prairie birds are regularly observed. The bald eagle count was down, with only 19 adults spotted, along with nine immature birds, for a total of 28. More than 50 eagles were spotted in the 2015 count, and the peak number observed historically was more than 60 in 2013. Since this bird is frequently spotted over long distances, the number of observations was undoubtedly reduced by the fog. One omission which could not be blamed on the fog was a lack of hummingbirds. In the past, as many as four species have been observed during the CBC. Fog fouls Christmas Bird Count

The most commonly observed bird was the yellow-rumped warbler, with 1,023 individuals, observed in all seven segments of the count area. This was closely followed by the laughing gull with 1,012 individual birds, the majority, 826, counted on Little St. George Island. This year, Kent E. Davis, president of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club, joined local birders for the count. He said he is joining as many counts as possible across the US as a bucket list goal. Davis was visiting Barry Kinzie of Apalachicola who also participated in the count. According to the Audubon website, the CBC helps inform conservationists about local trends in bird populations and plan strategies to protect birds and their habitat. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency included Audubon's climate change work from CBC data as one of 26 indicators of climate change in its 2012 report.



## Looking for Up-To-Date Birding Information

The Bird Club is updating its files. We are looking for recent items of interest to birders for us to use for handouts at meetings and local events. We are especially seeking relevant up-to-date materials about birding, bird apps and bird identification tools, bird feeding, protection and creation of bird habitat, bird houses, threats to bird populations and what we can do about it, bird migrations, birding with kids and fun material for children about birds, how to get started for new birders of any age, how to buy binoculars, birding hot spots, etc. If this is printed material from a magazine or another group's handout for example, you can bring it to a meeting and give it to Kent Davis club president, or Maxine Fraade. If it is online, please send it to maxinefr@aol.com

This is an ongoing project. So any time you find an interesting article or item online, please bring it to our attention. Thanks!

## 2017 Great Backyard Bird Count

The 20th annual GBBC will be held Friday, February 17, through Monday, February 20, 2017. This is an annual event sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society to learn more about how birds are doing and how to protect their environment. This group event consists of counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. The data is used to trend the increase or decrease in bird species populations which is part of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club's purpose.

To take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, make a list of all birds seen in your yard or other location and submit it at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org). You will have to register on the website or you can download the app to send in your list. Observations should be at least 15 minutes or more. There is also a contest for uploading your favorite photo taken over the weekend. Last year, more than 160,000 participants submitted their bird observations online, creating the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations ever recorded. Please visit the official website at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org) for more information.

## Bird of the Month - A Winter Surprise Visitor By Linda Cory

### Red-Breasted Nuthatch

Keeping a bird journal has always been a hobby of mine. Having lived in the same home for over 25 years, I've recorded 98 species. But for years, there has been a gap in my yard list – the red-breasted nuthatch. Although I've heard its sweet chatter in the yard, I've been a stickler for recording only birds that I have actually seen. At Christmas, I hung a new feeder off of our deck in plain view of the dining room table. For curiosity, I sat at the table to see who my first visitor to the feeder would be and lo and behold, it was a red-breasted nuthatch! I now had the 99th bird for my journal. Since then I have taken many pictures of my new friend and soon discovered there was more than one.



Red-breasted nuthatches are winter visitors to our area, but they have also been recorded here in the summer when they should be in the northern states and Canada. They can be seen at our seed and suet feeders, just like their cousins, the white-breasted and brown-headed nuthatch. Observing them next to the white-breasted, they are smaller and more timid and tend to eat on the run. The red-breasted nuthatch is the only North American nuthatch with an eyestripe and prefer a forested habitat. The picture taken at my feeder shows the comparison of the White-breasted (on the left) and the Red-breasted Nuthatch. What I thought was sweet chattering, the Cornell site describes it as nasal yammering. Besides being a beautiful bird, I am pleased to have them on my yard list - finally. Now I need to start looking for my 100th species!

## New Year's Day Bird Lists – A Great Way to Start 2017

As announced in the December newsletter and at club meetings, we were asked to email in our New Year's Day lists to [RVBC2015@outlook.com](mailto:RVBC2015@outlook.com). What better way to start 2017! This year, we had 13 club members send in their New Year's bird list totaling 62 species (up 6 species from last year!). The instructions were to bird at the place of your choosing. This year, all bird lists came from our own back yards or nearby parks and ponds. Although we missed the red-headed woodpecker from last year, we did have a nice array of other birds including a barred owl spotted by Laurie and Scott Spangler. The Spanglers picked up green-winged teal, hooded and common merganser, gadwall, bufflehead, ring-neck and pintail duck and pied-billed grebes, coots and a great blue heron at Greenfield. Carol Whiteside also reported the waterfowl from her pond adding Canada goose and mallards. Hawks and corvids were seen by many including the ravens seen by Ed and Joan Kinser, Alyce and Tim Quinn and Robin and Allen Austin. Kestrels, sharpies, red-tailed and shouldered and Coopers were also reported.

Rita and Jerry O'Brien reported pine siskins as did the Kinsers. The Kinsers and Linda Cory reported eastern phoebe. Eunice Hudgins saw white-throated and song sparrows as well as the red-breasted nuthatch which was also reported by more observers this year than last. Kathy Sink's report rounded out our group list with hairy woodpecker, black-capped chickadees, chipping sparrow and the only reported mockingbird. And, of course, no list is complete without the belted kingfisher which was observed by the Austins and the Spanglers. Thanks to all that participated!

## Annual Raptor Count

Spend a few hours driving away the winter blues on Saturday February 11, 2017. The annual Raptor Count is a great excuse to get out of the house and do some winter birding with your birding buddies!! No skill is required, just a little time and effort. Plan on a leisurely drive around your area, counting all the hawks you see. Points are awarded for each hawk, although this is not a serious competition. The winner gets bragging rights!! We compile the results from everyone's efforts and keep an eye on trends in hawk populations. In the unlikely event of inclement weather, an alternate date of Sunday February 12 has been set. Contact Anne Tucker (540) 721-1573 if you have any questions. The tally sheet can be emailed to [billt3256@gmail.com](mailto:billt3256@gmail.com) or mailed to 3256 Lakewood Forest Rd. Moneta VA 24121.



If you'd like to write an article or include anything in the newsletter please submit it to [nathan.anderson77@live.com](mailto:nathan.anderson77@live.com) before the 20th of the month. Thank you!

WINTER RAPTOR COUNT

February 11, 2017

Participants \_\_\_\_\_

Time Started \_\_\_\_\_ Time Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>NOTES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Turkey Vulture	*1			
Black Vulture	*2			
Red-tailed Hawk	5			
American Kestrel	10			
Common Raven	10			
Eastern Screech Owl	**10			
Cooper's Hawk	20			
Sharp-shinned Hawk	20			
Great Horned Owl	30			
Red-shouldered Hawk	30			
Barred Owl	35			
Northern Harrier	40			
Bald Eagle	50			
Barn Owl	50			
Loggerhead Shrike	50			
Merlin	75			
Peregrine Falcon	75			
Rough-legged Hawk	75			
Short-eared Owl	75			
Golden Eagle	100			
Northern Goshawk	100			
Long-eared Owl	125			
Northern Saw-whet Owl	125			
Northern Shrike	150			
Unidentified Raptor	5			

POINT TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

\* Maximum of 50 Points

Be sure to keep your totals! There is a 10-point bonus

\*\* Maximum of 100 Points

for peak counts of these three species.

RULES: Teams must be at least 2 people. Teams may bird any area within a 100-mile radius of Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center. Birds must be seen or heard by at least 2 team members. Count period cannot exceed a total of 12 hours.

Completed forms can be emailed to [billt3256@gmail.com](mailto:billt3256@gmail.com) or mailed to Anne Tucker

3256 Lakewood Forest Rd. Moneta VA 24121. Call Anne at 540-721-1573 with any questions.



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

2017 Roanoke Valley Bird Club Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships expire August 31st.

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