



January '20 Newsletter

Celebrating 63 Years of Birding
1957-2020

NEXT MEETING

Monday, January 13th at 7PM

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

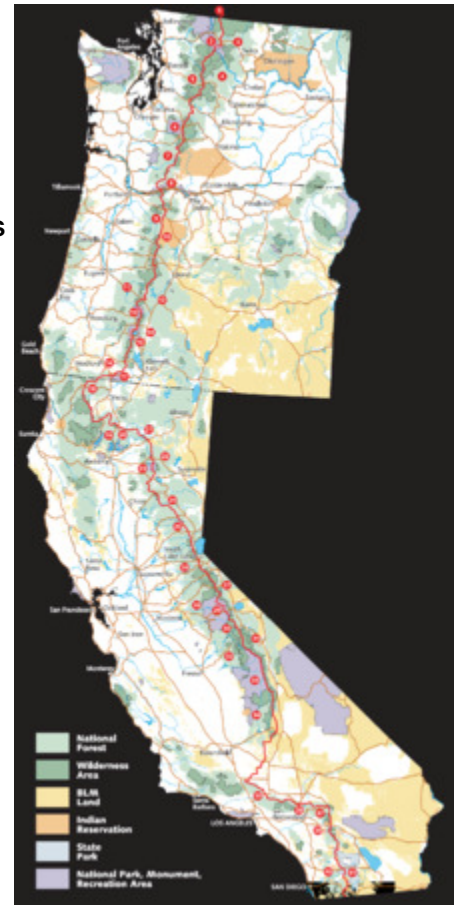
Join fellow club members for dinner at 5:30pm at the Brambleton Deli, 3655 Brambleton Ave.

Backpacking on the Pacific Crest Trail

Presented by Tom & Emily Reisinger

Tom & Emily Reisinger will share some of their experiences backpacking on the 2,660-mile-long Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. They will compare their perspectives on thru-hiking versus section-hiking on the Pacific Crest Trail. Tom & Emily will also highlight some of the western birds, wildlife, wildflowers, native plants, trail towns, and unique landscapes that they have encountered while backpacking in Washington, Oregon, and California.

Tom Reisinger is a semi-retired consulting forester living in Blacksburg, VA. He has taught in the forestry programs at Virginia Tech and Dabney Lancaster Community College and also worked as an industry forester. Emily Reisinger lives in Newport, VA and is a technical writer currently working with the Carilion Health Care System in Roanoke.



CLUB NEWS

CORRECTION

In last month's newsletter, the 2020 officers were listed. Please accept our apology for not listing Annie Downing as one of our Directors. Thank you!

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Christmas Bird Counts are not a new idea or limited to the Roanoke Valley Bird Club. The first count was done on Christmas Day 1900 by Frank Chapman, an ornithologist in New York, as an alternative to hunting birds. The count is a census of birds in the Western Hemisphere performed in a "count circle" with a diameter of 15 miles. The count period runs from December 14 to January 5 – see our reports below. Observers count every bird seen or heard in assigned areas. All counts are forwarded to the National Audubon Society to provide population data for use in science, especially conservation biology.

On December 14, 2019 the Roanoke Christmas Count was held. 21 observers found 54 species of birds. The best bird was a great egret at Murray's pond seen by Barry Kinzie and John Pancake. It was a misty rainy day and we missed some species that we normally get, such as fish crow, winter wren and brown creeper. Thanks to all who participated! Roanoke compiler, Bill Hunley



Great Egret—Kent Davis

The Botetourt County - Fincastle Christmas Bird Count was held on December 15, 2019. Twenty-one birders in nine parties found 63 species of birds including two Bald Eagles, two Northern Shovelers, a Brown Creeper, a Winter Wren, two Fish Crows, a Mute Swan and an Eastern Meadowlark. The low numbers of "northern birds" is attributed to a report of plentiful food in the northern US and Canada. Thanks goes to participants by fixing 'woodpecker stew' for a warm lunch followed by a little 'socializing' at Woodpecker Ridge in Troutville. Many thanks to those that helped! Fincastle compiler, Barry Kinzie

ANNUAL RAPTOR COUNT

Plan to spend a few hours driving away the birding blues on Saturday, February 8, 2020. The annual Raptor Count is a great excuse to get out of the house and do some winter birding!! No skill required, just a little time and effort. We count all the hawks that we can find. Just an excuse to get together with your birding buddies and enjoy a winter outing!! The form and more details will be in the February newsletter.

REMARKABLE BIRD BRAIN

Each fall, Black-capped Chickadees gather and store large supplies of seeds in many different places – an adaptation that helps them to survive harsh winters. But how do they remember where they stash their supplies of seed?

Scientists have shown that Black-capped Chickadees are able to increase their memory capacity each fall by adding new brain cells to the hippocampus, the part of the brain that supports spatial memory. During this time, the chickadee's hippocampus actually expands in volume by around 30 percent! In the spring, when feats of memory are needed less, its hippocampus shrinks back to normal size. This phenomenon also occurs in other food-storing songbirds, including jays, nutcrackers, and nuthatches.

This remarkable plasticity is related to hormonal changes in the birds' brains. Scientists are studying this ability in the hopes of eventually helping humans suffering from memory loss.

WEATHER POLICY

One third of our members live in areas where ice and snow can be much worse than in the city. A club meeting will be cancelled if either Roanoke City OR Roanoke County schools are closed on that meeting date. We still might cancel a meeting if there is impending weather. In that case, we will endeavor to send out an alert email, so please look at your emails if you are in doubt.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

December 11th – 2nd Wednesday Walk at Greenfield

13 birders enjoyed a beautiful, brisk day at Greenfield lake. 42 species were observed with the highlight being a Merlin. The waterfowl were out in numbers including Canada Geese, Wood Ducks, Northern Shovelers, Gadwalls, Mallards, Green-winged Teals, Ring-necked Ducks and Pied-billed Grebes. Among the smaller birds, there were Cedar Waxwings, a Hermit Thrush, Yellow-Rumped Warblers, and 4 Swamp Sparrows. 2 Ravens, a pair of Kingfishers and a Great-blue Heron were also seen.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

(For any additional information please contact Mary Harshfield at 540-309-8277 or RVBC2015@outlook.com)

NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD COUNT – Wednesday, January 1st

Start your 2020 out right by making a New Year's Day Bird List at the place of your choosing. This is not a group field trip nor a competition, just a great way to start the year out. If you haven't participated before, maybe this will be the start of a new tradition for you!

Make a note of all bird species seen and/or heard beginning midnight of New Year's Eve (which would officially be January 1st) and ending 11:59PM of January 1st. You may bird anywhere you would like (Florida?). Email your resulting bird list with the location to RVBC2015@outlook.com . Highlights from your lists will go in the February newsletter.

JANUARY 8TH, 9AM, 2ND WEDNESDAY WALK AT GREENFIELD

Join 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. Wear water-proof shoes for this 1.5 mile walk and bring your spotting scopes!

Directions: Take Exit 150B on I81 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.

JANUARY 25th, SATURDAY, 7:30am - HIGHLAND COUNTY BIRDING

Meet co-leaders Linda Cory (580-5214) and Toni Pepin at the parking lot next to Bojangles at Botetourt Commons on Route 220 in Daleville for this day of birding in Highland County. We will be looking for those winter wonders including the bald and golden eagles and maybe even a Rough-legged Hawk. We should also see a good variety of waterfowl. This is a full day event, so please bring lunch, snacks and drinks. Wear warm clothes and sturdy shoes. And bring your scope! Carpooling is required due to the limited space at some pull-off areas. NOTE: Please watch your email in case this trip gets cancelled or postponed due to weather. There's Roanoke weather and then there's Highland County weather.

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. Park close to Bojangles.

JANUARY 31ST – FEBRUARY 2ND, VSO TRIP TO OUTER BANKS

Make plans to join the annual Virginia Society of Ornithology field trip to the Outer Banks. There are always great waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors, along with a wide assortment of land birds. Leaders include Bill Akers, Jerry Via, Lee Adams and Meredith Bell. The headquarters for the weekend is at the Comfort Inn, South Oceanfront in Nags Head. This is a wonderful trip and a long, long time tradition for the Virginia Society of Ornithology. Our club is a chapter of the VSO and there are always some RVBC members on this favorite trip. Registration details are on the VSO website: <https://www.viriniabirds.org/events/upcoming-field-trips-index>



Roanoke Valley Bird Club
c/o Diane Malpass
3703 Forest Rd. SW
Roanoke, VA 24015



2019—2020 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 Diane Malpass 3703 Forest Rd. SW Roanoke, VA 24015	