



March '18 Newsletter

Celebrating 61 Years of Birding
1957-2018

NEXT MEETING

Monday, March 12th at 7PM
Grandin Court Baptist Church (First Floor Chapel)
2660 Brambleton Ave. Roanoke, VA 24015

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

BIRDING MAGEE MARSH

Long-time club members, Sid and Mary Lou Barritt, will talk about the wonders of Magee Marsh where you can experience warblers and other species close-up. This will be a great refresher for the upcoming warbler season. Mary Lou is an excellent bird photographer and her photos can be seen in our annual bird calendars.

Magee Marsh, situated on the southern shore of Lake Erie, is a prime stop-over for migrating passerines, especially warblers. Known as an unforgettable spectacle of large songbird concentrations preparing to migrate across the great lake to their breeding grounds in the north. Many birders visit the Marsh year after year as well as visiting the Canadian side (Point Pelee) where the birds first meet land after their migration.



UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

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

MARCH 10th, SATURDAY at 8am – LOCHER TRACT

Join Bill Hunley (467-3477) at 8AM at Botetourt Commons for a special 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 an excellent variety of birds with our target birds to include early migrant warblers, Wood Duck, Brown Creeper, Fox Sparrow and Hairy Woodpecker. Locher Tract is near Natural Bridge Station in Rockbridge County. There will be 2 miles of level walking, but wear sturdy, waterproof shoes. If time permits, we will then visit the Arcadia area and nearby Solitude Swamp. Directions: Exit at 150B on I-81 and follow signs to 220 North. Go about one mile and take a left on Commons PKY (formerly Wesley Rd) and then a right on Kingston Rd into the Botetourt Commons shopping center and park at Bojangles.

MARCH 14th, WEDNESDAY at 9am - 2nd WED. BIRD WALK at GREENFIELD

Join co-leaders: Barry Whitt (309-4353) and Kent Davis (355-6388) for a walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield. Bring your spotting scopes! We will walk around Greenfield Lake in search for waterfowl and songbirds. The walk will be mostly flat walk of about 2 miles. We will also cover the grassy area overlooking the lake or the trail down to the lower pond. For those that want to stay afterwards, we can lunch at Ballast Point Brewery overlooking the lake. This trip will be repeated on April 11th, but at 8AM. Directions: Exit at 150B on I-81 and follow signs to 220 North. Go about four miles and take a left at the entrance to the Greenfield Education and Training Center (across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation).

MARCH 31st, SATURDAY 6PM WOODCOCK WALK ON BENT MOUNTAIN

Meet Robin Austin (293-9071) 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 waterproof shoes just in case. The group will then carpool to a nearby area to observe the Woodcocks that start their courtship flight at sunset. Directions: The Community Center is at 10148 Tinsley Lane, Bent Mountain VA 24059.

Save-the-Date - VSO Annual meeting, May 18-20, 2018 in Harrisonburg, VA

Start making plans to attend the 2018 Virginia Society of Ornithology Annual Meeting! This year's meeting and field trip locations will provide great opportunities to see unique high elevation breeding species AND help support the Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (VABBA2). Saturday field trips will focus on Rockingham and Highland county and Sunday field trips will go to local birding hotspots. Register early by visiting <http://www.virginiabirds.org/events/annual-meeting/> and book your hotel room early to be assured of the special conference rates at the Hotel Madison.

SIGHTINGS

Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant

Roanoke City, Virginia, US
Feb 25, 2018 Roanoke Valley Bird Club field trip
led by Kent Davis and Linda
Cory, Started off with light rain and quickly
changed to just cloudy, 50 F
36 species



Best Birds were wood Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, Wilson's Snipe

2nd Wednesday Greenfield Walk

14 club members were treated to a balmy day for birding at Greenfield. 33 species were scene with good looks at a Snow Goose, a Northern Pintail, Common Merganzers, Buffleheads, Pied-Bill Grebes and other water fowl. Also seen were Yellow-rumped Warblers and stationary Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks.



CLUB NEWS

RAPTOR COUNT

Mother Nature was not real cooperative for the recent Raptor Count. Rainy, cool weather forced the rescheduling of the Count. Seven teams found some time and nice weather to search for raptors. Laurie & Scott Spangler had singing Meadowlarks, impatiently waiting for warmer weather and spring! Jim & Judy Phillips had a Bald Eagle on a nest! But the big winners were Donna Mateski, Bob Epperson and Mark Johnson. They spotted 5 Bald Eagles in and around Amherst County! Thanks to all who participated and we will do it again on the second Saturday in February 2019!

2018 RAPTOR COUNT TALLY

SPECIES	TOTAL							TOTAL SPECIES
	TEAM A	TEAM B	TEAM C	TEAM D	TEAM E	TEAM F	TEAM G	
TURKEY VULTURE	1	3	9	3	22	10	19	67
BLACK VULTURE		34	8		30	12		84
RED-TAILED HAWK		1		15	2	1	11	30
AMERICAN KESTREL	1	1		5	1	1	1	10
COMMON RAVEN	1	5			2			8
COOPER'S HAWK							1	1
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK				1		1		2
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK	1	3		2	1	2		9
NORTHERN HARRIER								
BALD EAGLE		1				5		6
GOLDEN EAGLE								
UNIDENTIFIED RAPTOR	1				1	1		3
TOTAL BIRDS	5	48	17	26	59	33	32	220
TOTAL POINTS	56	268	25	208	157	384	104	1,202

*** RECEIVED 10 BONUS POINTS FOR PEAK VULTURE COUNTS

- TEAM A - Alyce & Tim Quinn - Franklin County Hwy 122 from Burnt Chimney to Rocky Mount
- TEAM B - Jim & Judy Phillips - Giles County, along New River, etc.
- TEAM C - Carol & Laura Ely - Harvey's Knob on Blue Ridge Parkway
- TEAM D - Laurie & Scott Spangler - Botetourt & Rockbridge Counties
- TEAM E - RVBC Wed. Morning Walk - Greenfield Lake and 5 mile radius of lake
- TEAM F - Donna Mateski, Bob Epperson, Mark Johnson - Amherst County and surrounding areas
- TEAM G - Betty & Butch Kelly - Roanoke, Montgomery & Botetourt Counties

MILL MOUNTAIN ZOO

Mill Mountain Zoo is looking for groups who would like to be represented at their events. Bambi Godkin, the education coordinator for the zoo says, "you could have an information table, have an activity or do a talk".

Two of the events are:

Spring Fling, March 24th, 11 to 4 p.m.

Join us at Mill Mountain Zoo to celebrate the beginning of spring with activities related to gardening, birding, and other fun things to get you thinking about springtime! Enjoy spring themed crafts, get your face painted, and of course see our great collection of animal residents.

International Migratory Bird Day/Community Art Show, May 12th, 11-4pm

This will be the second year we've done something for IMBD. You probably already know, but IMBD is an international holiday celebrated in North and South America to bring awareness about migratory birds. A lot of zoos and organizations will host events with games and activities for kids and families. It's a pretty low-key event. We also have a community art show the same day. If someone brings an animal themed piece of art to hang during the event, they get in for free.

If you are interested, events at the zoo are a good opportunity to share your interest in birds with the general public, especially children. In the past, we have set up at a table (the table is provided) and had pamphlets to hand out as well as having an interactive activity to do with children and adults. If a few people are interested, Mary Harshfield will contact Bambi and coordinate getting materials to you. Another idea is to host a short bird walk or a bird talk at a specific time. Mary's contact information: mary.harsh803@gmail.com or 540-344-4341

YELLOW CARDINAL (Article from USA Today)

Talk about a rare bird. An unusual yellow cardinal has birdwatchers racing to Alabama as images of the unique creature have circulated around the Internet and social media. The bird was first spotted in Alabaster, Ala., in late January in the backyard of Charlie Stephenson.

Auburn University biology professor Geoffrey Hill told AL.com the cardinal is an adult male in the same species as the common red cardinal but carries a genetic mutation that causes it to have bright yellow feathers instead of the usual brilliant red.

Professional photographer Jeremy Black snapped a couple of shots of the bird, which have made the rounds of news sites nationwide. Red cardinals are found all across central and eastern North America, according to Cornell University's Ornithology Lab: "A year-round resident, the cardinal is a common visitor to bird feeders in winter, and it has been chosen as state bird in seven U.S. states." Non-red cardinals are very rare: "Yellow cardinals are a one-in-a million situation," Hill said.



BIRD OF THE MONTH - Pileated Woodpecker

As children, we may have known this bird as Woody Woodpecker, but the Pileated Woodpecker is far from a cartoon character. It is the largest of the North American woodpeckers and is found in all states east of the Mississippi, as well as California and the Pacific Northwest and all of Canada. While both the male and female sport a red crest, the female lacks the red cheek stripe, AKA moustache. Pileated Woodpeckers will excavate huge holes in search of grubs and other insects. They especially like ants and are susceptible to ant spray. They also will eat all kinds of berries including those from poison ivy. They are attracted to suet, but a larger suet feeder is needed to support their weight, about $\frac{3}{4}$ pounds. See the recipe for suet below.



To identify a Pileated Woodpecker in flight, look for the white wing patches and undulating flight pattern. Their loud call is hard to miss, too. They nest in the woods with their signature oval or rectangular holes. I have enjoyed watching them in the cypress swamps of South Carolina where I used to spend summers. I observed at least one flying to a nesting hole at break-neck speed only to fly straight into the hole without slowing down. I could only guess the special technique he used for stopping. At that same spot there were several nesting holes and saw two of them attempt to enter the same hole. After the confrontation, the second one quickly retreated a nearby hole with a chortle as if to say “My bad!”.



Linda Cory

Suet recipe

- 1 1/2 cups shortening (look for palm oil free options)
- 3/4 cups nut butter (any kind)
- 3 1/2 cups wild bird seed
- 1 cup quick oats
- 1/2 cup corn meal
- Ice cube tray

Steps:

1. Mix the dry ingredients of bird seed, oats, and corn meal together and set aside.
2. Combine the shortening and nut butter in a separate bowl and melt. Stir until completely combined.
3. Pour the melted mixture into the dry ingredients and stir until combined.
4. Spoon mixture into the ice cube tray.
5. Freeze for one to two hours and place in your suet feeder!

Provided by Kathy Clemo from the Audubon website



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



2018 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	