



# January '18 Newsletter

Celebrating 61 Years of Birding  
1957-2018

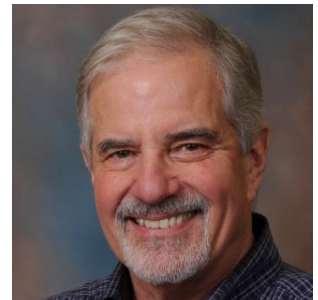
## NEXT MEETING

Monday, January 8th at 7PM  
Grandin Court Baptist Church  
2660 Brambleton Ave. Roanoke, VA 24015

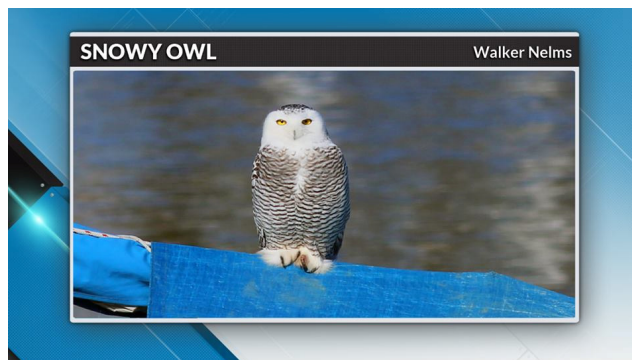
(Join fellow club members for dinner at 5:30PM at Brambleton Deli; 3655 Brambleton Ave.)

## ENCOUNTER WITH A SNOWY OWL

Walker Nelms is a longtime Roanoker who enjoys nature, sailing and among other things is known as a talented photographer. In December, he spotted and photographed a Snowy Owl which was posted on the Channel 7 news. He will be sharing his photos of this amazing bird as well as other birds at our January 8th meeting.



Our speaker is currently working for Angels of Assisi helping them with publicity. He has also done Publicity and Public Relations for the American Red Cross, the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke and Feeding America. He is a past board member of Southwest Virginia Wildlife Center of Roanoke and currently helps with their publications. As a side note, his wife, Carol designed their first logo.



## **UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS**

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

### **NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD COUNT – Place of YOUR choosing on Mon. January 1st**

Start your 2018 out right by making a New Year's Day Bird List at the place of your choosing. This is not a group field trip and is not a competition. Also, this is not a national organized count and there is no fee. Some of our members for years have made it a personal tradition to start their year by listing the birds seen/heard on the first day of the year. Maybe this will be the start of a new tradition for you, too!

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 (Hawaii?). Email your resulting list with where you birded, the time of day and all participant names to RVBC2015@outlook.com . Highlights from your lists will go in the February newsletter. Good luck everyone and Happy New Year!

### **JANUARY 10th, WEDNESDAY at 9am - 2nd WED. BIRD WALK @ GREENFIELD**

Join co-leaders: Barry Whitt (309-4353) and Kent Davis (355-6388) 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 February 14th. Directions: Exit at 150B on I81 and follow signs to 220N, keeping to the right of the traffic circle. On 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. Meet at the second parking lot at Greenfield on the right across the road from the lake.

### **Second annual MBC Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands Birding Boat Trip is set for January 13, 2018. (Trip Information from Doug Rogers.)**

The boat will leave the dock at 3311 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach, VA at 9:00 a.m. and return at 1:00 p.m. - weather permitting. I will be watching the wind and weather closely and give updates on a timely basis. I will need everyone's email and cell phone numbers so I can reach you with last minute updates. What to bring: Food, drinks and warm clothes. Layering is the best way to go. Cost: \$35.00 per person. A tip for the mate is included in your \$35.00 fee. Please make all checks payable to Monticello Bird Club. P.O. Box 4362 Charlottesville, VA 22905. To reserve your spot on the boat, please make your reservation now. I will need to have your money by Monday January 8, 2018. I will be able to give refunds for last-minute cancellations up until Thursday January 11, 2018. Space is limited so please make your reservation early. To register, please contact me at: doug5996@gmail.com or the Club email at: birders@monticellobirdclub.org. Or call me at: 434.409.8156. We had a great time on the trip this past January! Please join us!

### **January 20th, Saturday, 7:30am - Highland County Trip**

Meet Bob Epperson (871-3471) and Linda Cory (580-5214) at the parking lot next to Bojangles at Botetourt Commons on Route 220 in Daleville for this exciting day of birding in Highland and Bath Counties. 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. 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. This will be a joint trip with the Lynchburg Bird Club. 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: Exit at 150B on I81 and follow signs to 220N, keeping to the right of the traffic circle. Go ¾ miles and take a left on Kingston Rd into the Botetourt Commons shopping center. Bojangles is next to the Wendy's in the parking lot.

### **January 27th, Saturday, 9am - Ponds of Botetourt**

Meet our co-leaders, Tim and Alyce Quinn (312-6844), at the parking lot next to Bojangles at Botetourt Commons on Route 220 in Daleville. We will spend the morning visiting local ponds in search of waterfowl and other avian life. Carpooling is required due to the limited space at some pull-off areas. Bring your scope and dress warmly. Directions: Exit at 150B on I81 and follow signs to 220N, keeping to the right of the traffic circle. Go ¾ miles and take a left on Kingston Rd into the Botetourt Commons shopping center. Bojangles is next to the Wendy's in the parking lot.

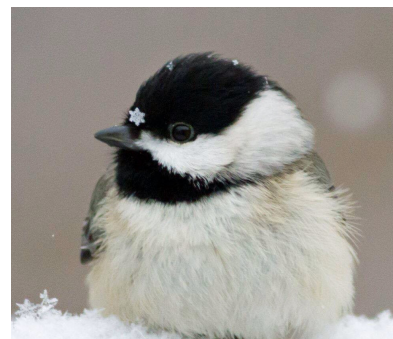
## **CLUB NEWS**

### **WINTER WEATHER**

Please remember that our meetings can be cancelled in the winter time. Our meetings are automatically cancelled if Roanoke County or City schools are closed.

### **HOLIDAY/CHRISTMAS CARD BIRD COUNT**

As bird watchers, we all receive cards from family and friends with birds on them. You might even send out cards with our feathered friends on them, too. In the spirit of competition, count all of the birds that are on the cards that you receive during the 2017 holiday season. Bring your total number of birds counted on your received cards to the January 8th 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 the total to [RVBC2015@outlook.com](mailto:RVBC2015@outlook.com).



## February 2-4, 2018 VSO Field Trip Outer Banks

Make plans to join us for the annual Virginia Society of Ornithology field trip to the Outer Banks. The weekend's leaders include Bill Akers and Jerry Via, as well as VSO field trip co-chairs Lee Adams and Meredith Bell. We always have great waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors, along with a wide assortment of land birds. Details are on the VSO website <http://www.virginiabirds.org/events/field-trip-announcements/20180202-outer-banks>.

Hotel Reservations must be made by January 8th to get the special VSO rate. 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.



L to R : Bob Epperson, Barry Whitt, Kent Davis and Barry Kinzie after finding a White-fronted Goose in Botetourt.



A leucistic House Finch  
At Carol Whiteside's  
Feeder



Cooper's Hawk feeding  
on a Blue Jay in Mary  
Lou Barritt's backyard

## ANNUAL RAPTOR COUNT

Cure the winter birding blahs! Plan to spend a few hours driving away the birding blues on Saturday, February 10, 2018. 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.

## Year of the Bird

The National Geographic Society has declared 2018 the Year of the Bird. Beginning with its January issue (available at newsstands), the magazine and its other media outlets will have stories about birds throughout the year.

## BIRD OF THE MONTH - Snowy Owl

On December 18th, many Roanokers were watching Channel 7 news when a picture flashed on the screen that started a real buzz in the birdwatching community. The photo had been taken by photographer Walker Nelms at nearby Smith Mountain Lake in Franklin County. The reason for the excitement is that the photo was of a very rare Snowy Owl. Per Barry Kinzie's book *The Birds of the Roanoke Valley* and *eBird*, this bird had not been reported in our area since 1960. The next morning, texts and phone calls were buzzing and the search began. Although the owl was on private property, a few club members were able to view the owl on two of five trips. Thanks is given to Anne Tucker for her keen eye and Alyce Quinn for meeting the searchers. Unfortunately, it has not been seen since December 23rd. The photo is proof that the Snowy Owl had been there. A Snowy Owl has also been seen this month 100 miles away in Mt Crawford, VA. Before this sighting, there have been sporadic reports of them in Waynesboro, Richmond and other locations in Virginia. Some club members (including myself) drove to Craney Island in Virginia Beach in the 1990's to see one.

### Here are some interesting facts about Snowy Owls:

- ◇ Unlike most other owl species, snowy owls hunt mainly in the daytime due to living the Land of the Midnight Sun.
- ◇ Their primary prey is lemmings (about 1,500 per year), but they are known to eat rabbits and birds including wild geese and ptarmigan.
- ◇ They are over two feet tall with a wing span of 5 ½ feet.
- ◇ Snowy Owls can live to 35 years in captivity, but the average is 10 years in the wild.
- ◇ The older a male snowy gets, the whiter he becomes while the females retain some of their black tipped feathers.
- ◇ Snowy Owls will "feather" their nest with dead lemmings (see picture).
- ◇ They are one of the heaviest owls due to their extra layer of insulating feathers which they need as they spend summers far north of the Arctic Circle where they raise their young.
- ◇ Check out this link: <http://mailchi.mp/birdwatchersdigest/this-birding-life-75-snowy-owl-invasion-with-scott-weidensaul?e=d61b851fe9>





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.

<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>	