



Roanoke Valley Bird Club



May 2022

Next Meeting

Due to the continued presence of COVID-19 and its variants, we will continue to meet via Zoom. Our next meeting via Zoom will be Monday, May 9th at 7pm. Please be on the look out for the Zoom link in your email the weekend before. Stay well, and happy birding.

Saving Seabirds: New Lessons From Puffins

Stephen Kress, Presenter

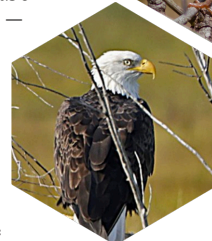


Stephen Kress is the founder of National Audubon Society's Project Puffin. He previously served as Vice-President for Bird Conservation for the National Audubon Society and Director of the Hog Island Audubon Camp in Bremen, Maine. Hundreds of professional seabird biologists trace their interest in seabirds to Project Puffin and many innovative seabird conservation methods that he developed in Maine are now standard practice worldwide. Dr. Kress received his Ph.D. from Cornell University and his Master's and undergraduate degrees from Ohio State University. He is co-author with Derrick Z. Jackson of Project Puffin: The Improbable Quest to Bring a Beloved Seabird back to Egg Rock and the recently published 'The Puffin Plan'. He is author of many studies of the

effects of climate change on forage fish and seabird management. He teaches an introductory course in Ornithology which is available online for bird enthusiasts in eastern states <https://www.cayugabirdclub.org/spring-ornithology>

Worldwide, about one third of all seabird species are globally threatened because of invasive predatory mammals, marine pollution, and effects of climate change. Against this grim background, Dr. Kress will share this hopeful story about the restoration of Atlantic Puffins and other seabirds to coastal islands of Maine. Against all odds, this inspiring Project demonstrates that people have the capacity to return seabirds to historic nesting islands and proactively help them find secure nesting places. By using stunningly beautiful photos, he will take us on a world tour of exotic islands where methods developed for bringing puffins back to Maine are now helping to create new colonies of endangered seabirds.

Dr. Kress will also share how restored colonies of puffins and terns are providing fresh insight into the changing marine climate of the Gulf of Maine and how seabirds serve as indicators of the health of coastal oceans. He will also share how solving the mystery of where puffins go in winter played a role in the establishment of the 'Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Marine Monument' – the only marine monument on the east coast.



Clockwise from top: Purple Gallinule (Garland Kitts); Barred Owl (Nathan Anderson); Painted Bunting (Mary Lou Barritt); Common Tern (Nathan Anderson); Bald Eagle (Bob Crawford); Sedge Wren (Kirk Gardner)

Some Puffin Action



Big Spring Day 2022

It's almost here - Big Spring Day returns on Saturday May 7th, 2022! This fun tradition is a count conducted jointly by the Roanoke Valley Bird Club and the Lynchburg Bird Club. About 15 groups of birders will cover designated areas within 7.5 miles of the Big Spring in the Peaks of Otter Picnic Area. This will be our 51st annual count and it is a rain or shine event.

Early May in the mountains of Virginia is a delightful time for spring birding. Migrating birds are heading north from the tropics to their northern breeding grounds. Other birds that spend the entire year here are setting up breeding territories and pairing up, which makes them more active, vocal, and easier to spot in their bright spring plumages.

Luckily, the pandemic restrictions continue to be lightened, so we will go ahead with a tally-up at Noon at the Amphitheater at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center. That said, if your Team is finding lots of birds, please feel free to keep birding through the afternoon and report in later.

Past Big Spring Day participants - if you haven't already done so, please contact your group leader to confirm whether or not you are able to attend this year.

Never birded on Big Spring Day? Newcomers are still, and always, welcome! Please contact Barry Whitt at ttihwb@gmail.com or 540-309-4353 and he will match you up with a group looking for fresh eyes.

Submitted by Donna Mateski de Sanchez, Big Spring Day Compiler and Barry Whitt Roanoke Coordinator

Earth Day Celebration April 23rd:

The Bird Club had a steady stream of visitors to our exhibit at Roanoke's Earth Day event on Saturday, April 23rd. We gave out lots of information and talked to dozens of people about our Bird Club and about birding in general. It was great to see such enthusiasm for birding. Special thanks to volunteers: Pam Perez, Cecile Newcomb, Donna Smith, Drew Daniels, Linda Barker, and Kathy Clemo. Submitted by Mary Harshfield

Field Trips

Note that if inclement weather necessitates a cancellation, an e-mail notification will be sent out. You can also call or text the leader or Mary Harshfield at 540-309-8277.

● 2nd Wednesday Walk at Greenfield (Wednesday, May 11th, at 8am)

Join leader David Frye (248-459-6783) for a bird walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield. We will walk around Greenfield Lake and possibly to the pond beyond. The walk will be mostly flat walking for about 1 mile each way. Bring your spotting scope if you have one. 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 right.

● May 21st, Saturday, 8 AM, Walrond Park:

Join leaders Sissy Logan (540-353-4500) and Linda Cory (540-580-5214) for a walk around Walrond Park. The park has a variety of habitats including a pond, wetlands, and grassy and wooded areas. Walrond Park is located at 6824 Walrond Drive which is off of Plantation Road close to the I-81 Hollins exit (Exit 146). Drive to the end of Walrond Drive, take a right and the parking lot will be ahead on your left. We will walk between one and two miles on mostly even ground however waterproof shoes are recommended since we may leave the path.



Fox Sparrow (Garland Kitts); Wilson's Snipe (George Clemo); Red-shouldered Hawk (Mary Lou Barritt)

Field Trip Reports

April 9th, Catawba Greenway

Bill Hunley led a group of 18 birders up the trail on what started out as a sunny, but windy walk. Annie Downing and Will Frye had already started a list from the area around the farm buildings. Annie kept the list and tallied 29 species. This included Field Sparrow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Meadowlark, Killdeer, Red-winged Blackbird, Red-tailed Hawk, and fabulous views of two Osprey soaring in the distance. When we arrived at the highest point, we noticed white specks blowing in the wind; it took a minute to realize it was snowflakes and not tree blossoms. By the time we returned to our cars, sleet was blowing sideways. We were glad we got in some good birding before the weather changed.

April 20th, Greenfield; Report from David Frye: “35 deg F? You’ve GOT to be kidding me!” Yes, it was (and I believe I can finally say this with certainty) the final night of this protracted winter. And, of course, there was a birding field trip set for the following morning. All that being said, 12 intrepid birders participated in what very quickly became a BEAUTIFUL morning! It turned out to be one of those “Where would you rather be?” kinds of mornings. After a while, we sensed that the birds felt the same way.

First looks at the lake were disappointing. We realized that many of the waterfowl species may have moved on to places further north, but there weren’t many geese or ducks to be had. Moving on, though, things got busy and so did we. Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, and Rough-winged Swallows were everywhere and very curious about our group—sometimes swooping down at us (no dramas – they maintained at least a foot of clearance/social distancing in their flight paths). Other highlights included Prairie Warblers (up close and personal in a luxurious and accommodating 5-minute viewing session), an Osprey (again, very accommodating, circling overhead for quite a long time), several nice viewings of Pileated Woodpeckers, an intriguing session listening to a Grasshopper Sparrow singing (no sightings, but memorable just the same), and a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers mating. All up, the group bagged 53 species and enjoyed themselves tremendously.



Birding Backpacks - Update

Great News! Birding Backpacks come to the City!

We wrote last months about RVBC's new initiative to partner with local and libraries to bring birding to new and diverse audiences in the Roanoke Valley through creating and donating Birding Backpacks. These will be checked out like other media such as books, CD's, DVD's, etc.

This is an exciting new chapter in RVBC's outreach. In sharing our joy of birding, the program works to ensure the future of birding and wild birds and gives library patrons the opportunity to explore nature in a new way with high-quality materials we provide.

Our initial program will be at the libraries of the Roanoke County Library System. We are now very pleased to announce that we will also working with the libraries in the Roanoke City Library System!

The Birding Backpack will contain a padded backpack with club and library logos, National Geographic Birds of Eastern North American, Vortex Crossfire 8x42 binoculars with case, straps, and lens cleaning cloth, Sibley's Backyard Birds of the Mid-Atlantic laminated fold-out, as well as information about getting started in birding, how to use binoculars, local birding hotspots, birding apps, and other basics which committee members created by committee members.

Please considering sponsoring an entire Birding Backpack for \$200. Or make a contribution of any amount to the general backpack fund which will help us buy the items above for inclusion in the backpack. We hope to start placing backpacks in libraries by summer. We need your help to make this happen!

This is a major undertaking! We have received partial funding from the Roanoke Valley Bird Club and the libraries. The rest is up to us, our RVBC members. We need member's support for this project to go forward.

You can contribute in two ways: Send a check to: Roanoke Valley Bird Club, P.O. Box 20405, Roanoke, VA 24018.

OR contribute online at roanokevalleybirdclub.com. Click on Membership/Donate from the menu on the left on the home page and after the page opens click on yellow Donate button. Paypal.com will automatically open to "Donate to Roanoke Valley Bird Club" and a box for Birding Backpack Fund will be in the center of the page. Enter the amount you want to donate above the box and choose whether donating through PayPal or a debit or credit card. The next page that opens has a space at the top for "Write a note (optional)". Then enter credit or debit card information. If you click instead on PayPal it will ask your username and password and open up to the "Write a note (optional)" page. Finally, click to complete your donation.

Thank you so much to club members who have already made donations! We are so appreciative of your support for this important project. Please join with these members and help support the future of birding! Any questions contact Maxine Fraade, Birding Backpack Committee chair at maxinefr@aol.com.





Roanoke Valley Bird Club
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Roanoke, VA 24018
Editor: Nathan Anderson

2021-2022 Roanoke Valley Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Make check payable: Roanoke Valley Bird Club PO Box
20405 Roanoke, VA 24018

Individual \$15 _____
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