



Roanoke Valley Bird Club



October 2022

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be **in-person** with a Zoom option on Monday, October 10th at 7pm at the Garden Club Building (3640 Colonial Ave, Cave Spring, VA 24018). We will continue to engage in best practices regarding Covid moving forward. We value everyone's safety and health. If you feel more comfortable wearing a mask, please feel free. If you choose not to wear a mask, please respect those who do. Thank you!

Birds, Butterflies and Tulips

Jeff Wright, Presenter

The presentation discusses Citizen Science opportunities and programs that focused on observing and measuring plants, birds, and butterflies throughout the seasons, over decades, and across the nation. Among the species discussed in the presentation are hummingbirds, snowy owls, eagles, warblers, monarch butterflies, and tulips. The focus is on wildlife migration and seasonal change as part of nature's calendar. Keeping track of when tulips bloom, ospreys arrive in Virginia, robins build their nests, butterflies appear, hummingbirds depart, ducks arrive, and when leaves change in the fall are all part of the magical calendar. Also discussed is the impact of climate change on birds and plants, and in Virginia. Yes, we have four seasons but many species are now arriving and departing earlier and later than their historic calendar dates.

Citizen Science projects contribute to understanding impacts on the historic patterns of the species. Many interactions in the nature world depend on timing. All aspects of the environment are affected by these interactions to include food webs, farms, forests, gardens, waters, and species abundance, distribution, and diversity. Changes to nature's calendar events - like bird migrations and the flowering of plants - are among the most sensitive species responses to climate change. Some of these changes to calendar events may be the proverbial "canary in the coalmine" for the species, the environment, and for all of us.

He will discuss some nationwide educational programs about the wonders of seasonal change, climate, and migration. These educational programs include observations about tulips, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

Jeff Wright is enthralled by protecting habitat and

Cont. pg. 2



species. Being called a Bird Brain or a Tree Hugger are no longer insults.

He is the President of the Board of Directors of the Old Growth Forest Network, a national organization dedicated to creating a network of forests, with one in each county where forests can grow, open for visitors and never logged, and a network of people inspired to protect them. www.oldgrowthforest.net

He is a Certified Virginia Master Naturalist, having recorded over 3000 volunteer hours and a past President of the Northern Neck Master Naturalists Chapter. Jeff is the President of the Friends of Dragon Run and a Kayak Paddle Tour Guide. He is a volunteer preserve leader, steward, and leads hikes for The Nature Conservancy at preserves in Virginia. He is the compiler for several multi-county bird counts, butterfly counts, and citizen science projects within Virginia. He is a believer in the importance of advocacy in protecting the natural world and that the environment is part of the nation's national security dialogue and a priority global challenge.



Virginia Bluebird Society Conference

We'll be celebrating the 25th anniversary of our founding the weekend of November 11 and 12. Whether you are an experienced bluebird landlord or just beginning, we have breakout sessions both fun and informative planned with you in mind.

Presenters include VBS' own Anne Little on Bluebirding 101 and VBS Vice President Doug Rogers providing tips and tricks for the bird photographer. Jessica Ruthenberg, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resource's Watchable Wildlife Biologist will advise you on creating backyard habitat. Wildlife rehabilitator Maureen Eiger will be joining us and we have two North American Bluebird Society directors providing answers to all your questions.

And while you may not have heard of our Keynote Speaker Julie Zickefoose I promise you will be "wowed" by her. She is a prolific artist and writer. On her website you can see her artwork, listen to her past lectures, and read her blog. She will be selling copies of her books and prints at the conference.

The conference takes place at Northern Virginia Community College in Woodbridge Virginia. Registration opens in early September on the VBS website. Contact vbs@virginiabluebirds.org for more information.

Annual Dues

Dues for our club are due every September and can be paid in person at the next meeting. Other options are mailing a check to the address on the back of the newsletter or clicking roanokevalleybirdclub.com/Membership.html and completing the online form. \$15 covers for a single membership and \$25 for a family and Student memberships are \$10. Membership benefits include receiving our monthly newsletter and having voting privileges; however, visitors are welcome to attend meetings and bird walks for free.

Club Calendars Ready for Sale

We are excited to offer the Roanoke Valley Bird Club 2023 Calendar. 25 Amazing Photos taken by our own members for only \$16. To see sample pictures, click here

<http://roanokevalleybirdclub.com/2023%20Sneak%20Peek.pdf>

The easiest way to buy one is in person at one of our meetings or on our pick up day at the club meeting location on November 19th from 10am-2pm. You can use cash, check or credit card. As our club fundraiser, we are always looking for places to sell them and your suggestions are welcome at RVBC2015@outlook.com.

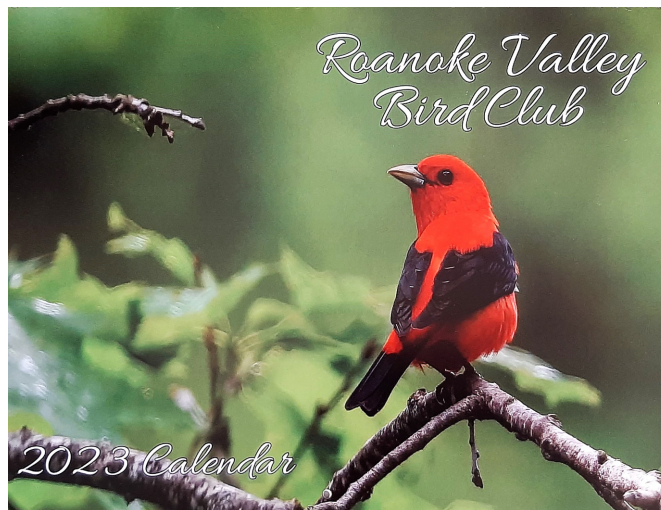
Calendar can also be bought online at <http://roanokevalleybirdclub.com/> or by mailing in the order form below to PO Box 20405, Roanoke VA 24018.

of Calendars _____ X \$16.00 if picking up = _____

of Calendars _____ X \$18.50 if shipping = _____

Address to send calendars to (enter address even if picking up):

If you are ordering more than 4 calendars, please email us to get a more accurate (and lower) shipping cost RVBC2015@outlook.com



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.

- Mill Mountain (Saturday, October 1st 8 am)

Meet leaders Sissy Logan and Mary Lou Barritt near the Discovery Center on Mill Mountain. We will walk about a mile around the top of Mill Mountain looking for migrating warblers such as Nashville, Tennessee, Magnolia, Red Start and Cape May among others. We may also see Tanagers and Yellow-billed Cuckoos.

- Bent Mountain Center (Saturday, October 8th, 8:30 am)

Join leader Robin Austin (540-676-0951) in the parking lot of the Bent Mountain Center at 10140 Tinsley Lane, Bent Mountain, VA. The property behind the Center is a high-elevation bog so there are often some interesting birds there. There will be some walking on level ground (about a mile) and some driving to nearby locations, depending on what Robin finds in the area that week.

- 2nd Wednesday Walk at Greenfield (Wednesday, October 12th 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 in search for migrants and incoming waterfowl. The walk will be mostly flat, 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. 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 the right.

- Fenwick Mines, Newcastle (Saturday, October 29th, 8 am)

Meet leader Bill Hunley (540-467-3477) at the Park and Ride lot at Exit 140 on I-81 at 8:00 a.m. to carpool to Fenwick Mines and surrounds. A favorite of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club, this trip covers a wide range of habitats in a relatively small area. This includes open fields, a small pond, wetlands, a mountain stream and mixed pine and hardwood forests. The Fenwick Nature Trail is one mile of easy walking. We will look for a variety of birds and hope for Red Crossbills which have been spotted there in years past.

November field trips (details to follow in November newsletter):

Nov. 9th: Greenfield 2nd Wednesday walk with David Frye

Nov. 13th: Sewage Treatment Plant with Kent Davis and Linda Cory

Field Trip Reports

Green Hill Park (September 24th)

Kent Skaggs was joined by 16 birders for a morning walk at Green Hill Park. Beautiful weather was enjoyed by the group as the temperatures ranged from the mid 50's to low 60's with mostly sunny skies. Thirty-six species were observed with some of the better sightings being a late juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, a pair of American Kestrels, an adult Bald Eagle, a Northern Parula, Philadelphia Vireo, Scarlet Tanager and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Feather ID

I recently ran across two very interesting websites that identify birds exclusively by their feathers.

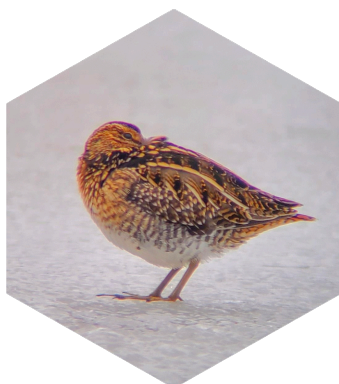
<https://www.fws.gov/lab/featheratlas/index.php>

Featheratlas is an image database dedicated to the identification and study of the flight feathers of North American birds from the collection of the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory. They currently have 438 species on their website and a good identification tool to help figure out what bird your feather came from. (Note: it is illegal to possess feathers of native North American birds without a permit.)

<https://featherbase.info/en/home>

Featherbase.info is harder to navigate but it is the biggest and most comprehensive feather library in the world with 1793 species and 15,000+ images, and not just flight feathers, and a lot of information. Check that English comes up. It's from a working group of German feather scientists (who knew? It's called plumology) and worldwide collectors. Also has some fascinating links from all over the world and though the links are listed in German, when I randomly opened several they were actually all in English.

– Maxine Fraade



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

2022 R.V.B.C. Bluebird Trails Summary

Submitted by Carol Whiteside



Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) are well known in the United States for their brilliant plumage, sweet song, and use of nestboxes. It is hard to imagine that this species nearly went extinct in the early 1900s because of a deadly combination of management practices that removed the dead tree snags that bluebirds depend upon for nesting, the introduction of exotic species that competed for nesting cavities, and the detrimental effects of pesticides. The recovery of populations across the eastern United States is an example of how everyday citizens can play a role in conservation. The major factor in the bluebird's recovery was the establishment of nestboxes by private landowners across their range.
 - National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Everglades, Florida

We offer sincere appreciation to the dedicated volunteers who monitor the bluebird trails weekly all season to insure the success of our area Eastern Bluebirds. This year, our **bluebirds produced 410 eggs and fledged 363 for a success rate of 86%, this was a very successful year for both trails!** These annual statistics are reported to the Virginia Bluebird Society at the end of each season. Most assuredly, the RVBC (and the birds!) gratefully thank the bluebird trails' volunteers for participating and monitoring in this vital conservation endeavor. A heart-felt **THANK YOU to: Allen and Robin Austin, Sissy Logan, Judy Repass, Mary Lou and Sid Barrett, Beth and Alan Boyce, Lindsay Eades, Diane and Michael Malpass, Nancy Reid, Karen Shelton, Carol Whiteside, Dan Whitcomb, Mary Ellen Belcher, Mary Harshfield, Dick Hendrix, Jenn Walker, Al & Deb McPherson, Kathy Sink and Joanne Spetzler.** Please let us know if you are interested in monitoring, it is very rewarding!

Blue Ridge Parkway Trail: The section from Route 220 south to Adney Gap on Bent Mountain is still closed due to the landslide of spring 2020. Carol has been hiking three miles to monitor the five boxes in this section; although, the National Park Service has completely closed it now that construction is underway. Despite the inconvenience of travel our dedicated volunteers monitored the boxes faithfully with only one box not reachable in the closed section, and one box that has normally been successful, but did not produce this year. This trail produced the most eggs with the most fledglings for the highest success rate recorded. There was one box with three nest attempts. Through 23 years of record keeping our Parkway trail total has produced **5,568 eggs with 4,204 fledglings, for a 76% success rate.** With sincere appreciation to all of our faithful volunteers, thank you! A special thanks goes to Al McPherson who also assisted with monthly weed whacking!

Hanging Rock Golf Course Trail: First, we would like to thank our faithful and knowledgeable monitors. Without our monitors, we would not be able to boast that our trail had the most successful season since 2016!

Our first egg appeared on March 27, 2022. Several early nestings allowed four of our boxes to have three nestings during the season. Our last baby fledged on August 14. Our ratio of fledged bluebirds to the number of eggs laid was 87%. We had 44 nest attempts, 197 eggs laid of which 178 hatched and 171 bluebirds fledged. Fortunately, we experienced very little predation, perhaps since we moved several of our boxes to safer locations last year. In past years we have had other species, but this season and also last season our 21 boxes were only filled with beautiful bluebirds!

Our hats went off to Nancy Reid and her daughter who found four newly hatched babies covered in mites during their monitoring rotation. They carefully removed the nest and cleaned out the infestation, and while holding each baby, picked the mites from their tiny bodies. We were positive these four babies were doomed, but happily they all survived and fledged!

We submitted our annual trail summary form to the VBS at the end of August, but our work doesn't end. Beth and Alan Boyce kindly replaced two of our old dilapidated boxes with new ones. We will be protecting all the boxes with preserving sealant during the coming months in preparation for a new season, hopefully as successful as 2022!

Blue Ridge Parkway Carol Whiteside, Chairman 32 boxes			
Species	Eggs	Fledged	Success
E. Bluebird	213	185	87%
C. Chickadee	0	0	0%
TreeSwallow	19	16	84%
House Wren	6	6	100%
Total	238	207	87%
First egg: March 27, 2022			
Last fledging: August 18, 2022			



Hanging Rock Golf Course Sissy Logan and Judy Repass, Chairmen 21 boxes			
Species	Eggs	Fledged	Success
E. Bluebird	197	178	87%
C. Chickadee	0	0	
TreeSwallow	0	0	
House Wren	0	0	
Total	197	178	87%
First egg: March 27, 2022			
Last fledging: August 14, 2022			

If you would like more bluebird information or are interested in purchasing a bluebird box (especially for a Christmas gift, we now have a post driver to borrow for installation), please contact Carol Whiteside 540-774-2143.

Roanoke Valley Bird Club Joins Blue Ridge Wildflower Society for 2022 Picnic

After two Covid years without social gatherings, we were ready to celebrate! There were 57 people confirming, but 42 actually attended. This meant we ordered extra meat for 15 people, all the merrier for those who took home the left-overs!

To make everyone feel comfortable we made Covid adjustments like offering hand sanitizer, disposable gloves and fresh air flow with open windows and doors on such a beautiful August 13, Saturday. Over a dozen volunteers helped with setup and wrapup making our allotted time run smoothly. These volunteers setup ten tables (six chairs each) with tablecloths and centerpieces that reflected both clubs. In addition there were three tables of potluck food plus two tables of desserts – an abundance of deliciousness! We also enjoyed getting together to catch-up, a sense of belonging in our friendly social atmosphere, and meeting others we hadn't previously met, including new members. To everyone's surprise, there was a drawing for parting gifts as is the tradition of the Bird Club.

We extend a huge "thank you" to everyone who contributed to the successfulness, which is each of you who were present! I made notes to reflect even better options for next year. The many years of this annual picnic tradition is thriving due to the hard work and dedication from Betty and Butch Kelly. We truly missed them this year - congratulations Butch who was the guest of honor for his milestone birthday celebration! We are already looking forward to next year's picnic, see you all then!

– Carol Whiteside





Roanoke Valley Bird Club
PO Box 20405
Roanoke, VA 24018
Editor: Nathan Anderson

2022-2023 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 _____
Family \$25 _____
Student \$10 _____
Adopt a Bluebird \$15 _____
Additional Contribution _____
Total Payment _____