

The Roanoke Valley Bird Club



Next Meeting:
October 14, 7:00 pm
Grandin Court Baptist
Church

Celebrating
56 Years of Birding
1957-2013

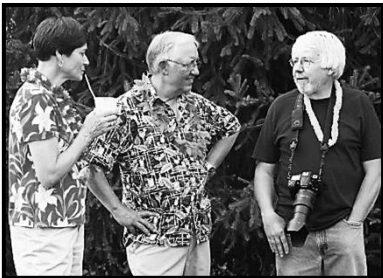
www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

RVBC NEWSLETTER

October 2013



The 15th Annual Bluebird Luau Sept. 7, 2013, celebrating at Tim and Alyce Quinn's home, honoring the bluebird trail monitors



MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT
KENT DAVIS

Dear Roanoke Valley Bird Club Members,

We are in the midst of the great fall migration! Recently I read, "There are about 10,000 bird species in the world and about half of them migrate. That's an estimated 50 billion migratory birds out of the 200-400 billion individual birds on the planet. **In eastern North America over two-thirds of all breeding birds migrate.** They travel by day and by night across vast stretches of land and sea. They navigate using familiar landscapes, mental star charts, magnetic fields, and angles of ultra-violet light emitted by the setting sun that are invisible to us." Simply amazing! There are many birding spots in our valley to see this movement, perhaps the best known is Harvey's Knob on the Blue Ridge Parkway, mile marker 95.6. There you will always find extremely knowledgeable and dedicated volunteers who observe, record, and share this birding experience. Other local hotspots for fall migration and birding include Greenfield in Botetourt County; some of the birds seen in September were Lincoln's Sparrow, Great Egret, Northern Waterthrush, Pied-billed Grebe, Osprey, Kestrel and Blue-winged Teal. At Fenwick Mines in Craig County were Lawrence's Warbler (Hybrid) and Olive-sided Flycatcher.



Thanks and Good Birding,

Kent

kedjr@cox.net
540-344-8377

Next Meeting:

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 7:00 PM

Grandin Court Baptist Church

Featured program:

Sex in the City: The Reproductive Behavior of Radford's Bluebirds

Judy Guinan is a behavioral ecologist in the Biology Department at Radford University. With Jason Davis, her colleague at Radford, and their undergraduate students, she studies the interaction between hormones and reproductive behavior and success in eastern bluebirds. She completed her Ph.D. in Ecology at the University of Georgia, where she studied the reproductive behavior and ecology of her other favorite avian species, western bluebirds. In this talk, targeted for a general audience, Judy will cover some basic natural history information about eastern bluebirds, delve lightly into her research on their behavior, and briefly discuss some resources for people who wish to become further involved with these beautiful resident birds.

***Please join us for dinner before the meeting
Brambleton Deli, 3655 Brambleton Road, 5:30 pm***

The previous program during the September Meeting featured **Nell J. Fredericksen** who presented **The Cultural, Geographical and Avian Diversity of Bolivia.**

The Roanoke Valley
Bird Club

Roanoke, Virginia



**2012~2013
Executive Board**

Officers

President

Kent Davis 344-8377

First Vice President, programs

Butch Kelly 384-7029

Second Vice President, memberships

Eleanor Dye 890-1627

Secretary

Candy Andrzejewski 365-2508

Treasurer

Robin Austin 929-9071

Directors-at-Large

Eunice Hudgins 389-4056

Alyce Quinn 719-0109

Standing Committee Chairmen

Bluebird Trail

Alyce Quinn 719-0109

Field Trips

Linda Cory 580-5214

Newsletter

Carol Whiteside 774-2143

Publicity

Maureen Eiger 342-4890

Website:

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

CONTACT US!

The RVBC Newsletter is published monthly from September through May with the deadline for each issue on the **20th of the month** prior to publication. Photos and articles are gladly accepted for publication as room allows and may be sent electronically, but if original photos are mailed please include a SASE for photo return.

Thank you!

Carol Whiteside

6487 Shingle Ridge Road • Roanoke, VA 24018
whitesidemules@yahoo.com 540.774.2143

WINTER FINCH FORECAST 2013-2014

BY RON PITTAWAY

GENERAL FORECAST: This is not an irruption (flight) year for winter finches, but there will be some southward movement of most species into their normal winter ranges. Ontario's cone crops (except white pine) and deciduous seed/berry crops are generally above average to excellent. Very good to bumper spruce cone crops extend across Canada's boreal forest from Yukon (bumper) east to Atlantic Canada, with rare exceptions. Cone crops are good to excellent (poor on white pine) in central Ontario and Laurentian Mountains in southern Quebec with heavy crops extending east through the Adirondack Mountains of New York and northern New England States. Birch, alder and mountain-ash berry crops are good to excellent across the boreal forest. Most reporters said that finches were thinly dispersed in their areas with few concentrations noted, except for southern Yukon which had abundant Pine Siskins this past summer. Finches this winter should be widespread given the almost continent-wide extent of the seed crops. Limited movements southward to traditional wintering areas such as Algonquin Park are expected. See individual species forecasts below for details on each species. Three irruptive non-finch passerines whose movements are linked to finches are also discussed. Please note that the forecast applies mainly to Ontario and the Northeast.

FINCH TREES: The key trees affecting finch movements in the Northeast are spruces, pines, hemlock, birches and mountain-ashes. Other trees normally play minor roles unless their crops are bumper. This year many tree species have spotty or patchy crops with some trees being heavy with cones or fruit while nearby trees of the same species have few or no cones or seeds. A similar patchy distribution is evident on a larger scale, with stands heavy with cones or seeds versus stands in the next township or county that have scanty crops.

INDIVIDUAL FINCH FORECASTS

PINE GROSBEAK: Most Pine Grosbeaks will remain in the north this winter because mountain-ash berry crops are very good to bumper across the boreal forest from Alaska to the island of Newfoundland. European mountain-ash, crabapple and buckthorn have heavy berry crops in southern Ontario and elsewhere so if grosbeaks wander south they will have plenty of food. They prefer sunflower seeds at feeders, often feeding on spilled seeds on the ground.

PURPLE FINCH: In most years Purple Finches migrate south of Ontario in the fall, but this winter some should remain in the north where tree seed crops are abundant. They will likely visit sunflower seed feeders and be attracted to heavy berry crops on mountain-ashes, eating the seeds not the flesh. Similar to the Evening Grosbeak decline, Purple Finch numbers dropped significantly after 1980 as major spruce budworm outbreaks ended.

RED CROSSBILL: Small numbers are being reported in Algonquin Park and northern Ontario usually in pine stands. Red Pine cone crops are fair to good in many areas, but White Pine crops are poor with a few exceptions such as around Temagami just south of the boreal zone. Expect to see a scattering of Red Crossbills where pine, spruce and ornamental conifers have good crops. Red Crossbills comprise at least 10 "types" in North America. Each type probably represents a separate or recently evolving species. The types are usually impossible to identify without recordings of their flight calls. Matt Young (may6 at cornell.edu) of The Cornell Lab of Ornithology will identify types for you from recordings and this will help his research. Most Type 3 crossbills from last winter's irruption have apparently returned to their core range in the Pacific Northwest. Matt says it is important to monitor the distribution of types in more "normal years" such as this winter. This crossbill rarely goes to feeders.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: Spruce cone crops are generally good to excellent from the Yukon east across the boreal forest to the island

of Newfoundland. Large crops extend south into the northern states. White-winged Crossbills should be widely dispersed this winter given the enormity of the cone crops. Expect to see this crossbill in Ontario's Algonquin Park, New York's Adirondack Mountains and in the northern New England States. This crossbill usually feeds on native conifers with small soft cones such as white, red and black spruces and hemlock. It normally avoids the larger harder cones of pines. This crossbill rarely goes to feeders.

COMMON REDPOLL: Most redpolls should stay in the north this winter because birch, alder and conifer seed crops are generally good across the boreal forest. Some redpolls should get south to usual southern parts of their winter range such as the Atlantic Provinces and Ontario's Algonquin Park (Latitude 45.5), where redpolls have been recorded on 33 of 39 Algonquin Christmas Bird Counts. The rare "Greater" Common Redpoll (subspecies *rostrata*) from Baffin Island and Greenland is not expected in the south this winter. For reference photos of "Greater" Common Redpolls see link #4 below.

HOARY REDPOLL: The rare Hoary Redpoll is usually found in flocks of Common Redpolls. It is not expected in the south this winter because this is not an irruption year for redpolls. The "Southern" Hoary Redpoll (*exillipes*) is the usual subspecies seen. "Hornemann's" Hoary Redpoll (*hornemanni*) is a great rarity south of the tundra even during irruption years.

PINE SISKIN: Siskins will winter across the north because conifer crops (except white pine) are excellent. They should be attracted to heavy cone crops in southern Quebec's Laurentian Mountains, New York's Adirondacks and northern New England. Watch for siskins on spruce and hemlock. They prefer nyger seeds at feeders.

EVENING GROSBEAK: This big "eye-catching" golden grosbeak should visit sunflower seed feeders again this winter in Ontario and the Northeast. Numbers are increasing due to expanding spruce budworm outbreaks in northern forests. However, spraying to control budworms, if not already occurring in some provinces, will limit an increase in grosbeaks. Breeding success is higher in areas with budworm outbreaks because the abundant larvae are eaten by adults and fed to young. Evening Grosbeak populations peaked during the 1940s to 1980s when massive budworm outbreaks stretched across Canada. The last Algonquin Christmas Bird Count with very high numbers was the winter of 1984/85 when 1474 Evening Grosbeaks were found on the count (Birds of Algonquin, Tozer 2012).

IRRUPTIVE PASSERINES

Movements of the following passerines are often linked to the boreal finches.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH: No movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches this year reliably predicts that spruce cone crops are heavy in the boreal forest. This indicates a non-irruption year for finches, especially Pine Siskins and White-winged Crossbills which similarly specialize on conifer seeds, especially white spruce seeds. Some more southerly nuthatch populations may be permanent residents. We have Red-breasted Nuthatches year-round at our suet, sunflower and peanut feeders in Toronto and they annually bring their young to the feeders.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: Most Bohemians will remain in the boreal forest this winter because mountain-ash berry crops are very good to bumper from Alaska to Newfoundland and Labrador. When feeding on mountain-ash berries, Bohemians and Pine Grosbeaks often occur together. The superficial resemblance of Bohemian Waxwings to female Pine Grosbeaks is striking and may be functional. If some Bohemians move south they will be attracted to abundant berries on European mountain-ash, small ornamental crabapples and buckthorn.

Meet a Member

MIKE SMITH



I first joined the Roanoke Valley Bird Club in 1989, and then dropped out around 2000 due to work load; I rejoined 3 years ago. At the present I am just a member, although in the 90's I was president for 5 years and field trip leader for about 5 years.

Lifetime Memberships

Linda Cory
Fred Cramer
Mike Donahue
Eunice Hudgins
Tina Kemper
Barry Kinzie
Carole Massart
Bill Opengari
Alyce Quinn
Mike Smith
Elly Wefel

Congratulations!

You can blame **Barry Kinzie** for my involvement in birding. I started going on the field trips he led every year for the Wildflower Society. I was a member then and I remember thinking this guy really knows his birds. In 1988 I went to Harvey's Knob to the hawk watch. There I met **Jim Ayers** and we really hit it off. I hawk watched for a couple of years and then I just couldn't sit still that long. Jim and I were birding the entire state. We went to the coast many times, including the Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands and all of the Eastern Shore. **Peggy Spiegel** was leading a trip to Costa Rica at this time and Jim talked me into going. After that I was hooked on birding Central America. Other than Costa Rica I have birded Guatemala and Honduras, also birded Abaco in the Bahamas with **Jim Ayers** and **Kent Davis**. Once I started birding I was immediately hooked on listing. That has caused me to go to many parts of the United States that I probably wouldn't have seen. This year I worked on the Breeding Bird Survey with Kent.

I am a life-long resident of Roanoke except for the 4 years I was in the military. I have been a realtor for about 37 years and own Progress-Rush Co., a small real estate firm in Roanoke. At present I do mostly property management. I enjoy genealogy; however, birding is my release from the day to day pressures and I love being out in nature. I can't wait to retire so I can devote more time to birding!

Note: Recently Mike was unanimously voted by the board of directors to the RVBC Lifetime Membership for his solid work in birding and for serving as past president of the club. Congratulations Mike!

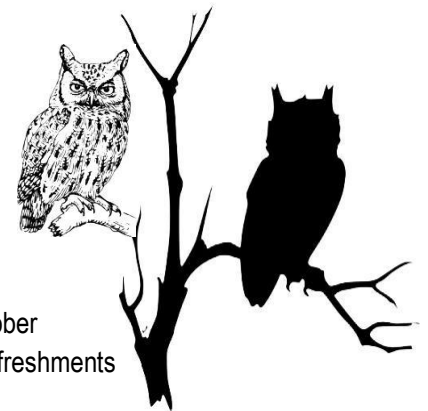
Welcome New Members!



Alice Bernard of Rocky Mount
Judy Kniskern of Vinton
Lourdes Page of Salem

Who Gives the Hoot!

- Our apology to Barry Kinzie for the misspelling of his name in the last issue.
- A pair of sunglasses was left at the Bluebird Luau. If you think they are yours please email Alyce, twoquinns@yahoo.com or call 540-719-0109.
- If you would like to volunteer for the Seed Sale to help set up, keep track of orders, visit with the public, or load bags, please contact Alyce Quinn: twoquinns@yahoo.com or phone 719-0109. Please bring any old, unwanted bird feeders to the sale or to the October meeting for resale donation, just make sure they're reasonably clean. And please bring refreshments to share which are always appreciated!
- Ed Kinser's class, Birds of the Blue Ridges, is being offered January through February 2014, see details on page 7 to sign up before this class fills.



2014 RVBC annual dues are due!

Please renew your membership using the form on the back and send with check made to RVBC:
Eleanor Dye • P.O. Box 74 • Vinton, Virginia 24179

SEEDS FOR A SONG

Saturday, November 9, 2013

Roanoke Valley Bird Club Fund Raiser

In Cooperation with Northwest True Value Hardware

We are having a seed sale to benefit both you and the community. By placing an order with us, you will get quality seed containing little or no waste, harvested this year, at reasonable prices. Proceeds from the sale will be used for community projects. The sale is open to the public, so please copy this form and distribute it to friends and neighbors. There will be a small supply of extra seed available the day of the sale for those unable to pre-order. Refreshments will be served, bird feeders, bluebird boxes and club calendars will be available for purchase, and experienced birders will be on hand to answer questions.

Orders must be received by October 14 and picked up on Saturday, November 9, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., at:

Northwest True Value Hardware (about a half mile south of the entrance to Hollins University)
7650 Williamson Road, Roanoke VA 24019
(540)-362-2112

If you are unable to pick up your seed on November 9, please make arrangements for someone else to pick it up for you.

It's easy to order:

1. Complete the enclosed order form, being sure to include your name, phone number, and address along with your seed selections.
2. Calculate the total, which **already includes** Virginia sales tax.
3. Mail your completed form and check, payable to Roanoke Valley Bird Club, *in time for it to be received by October 14*, to: Eunice Hudgins, 870 Stonegate Ct., Salem, VA 24153. (Please do not include membership dues with your seed sale order. Membership dues should be mailed to Robin Austin, Treasurer.)

Seed Descriptions

Wild birdseed mixes attract ground-feeding birds such as mourning doves, juncos and sparrows:

- *Gourmet Mix*: contains millet, sunflower, safflower and thistle.
- *Shell Free Mix*: a waste-free mix of millet, sunflower chips, cracked corn, canary seed and peanut hearts.

Sunflower seed is the best all-around food, favored by a wide variety of birds:

- *Black Oil Sunflower*: smaller than the striped, with thinner shell, more kernel and higher oil content; preferred 2:1 over other seed by most feeder birds.
- *Sunflower Chips*: the heart of the seed, virtually no hull, no mess, and more meat per pound.
- *Striped Sunflower*: many common feeder birds, such as cardinals, jays, grosbeaks, titmice, chickadees, sparrows and finches, as well as squirrels, like this larger, thicker shelled seed.

Specialty seeds:

- *Nyjer (Thistle)*: especially good for goldfinches and pine siskins, this seed is rich in nourishing oil.
- *White Millet*: favored by ground feeding birds such as juncos, towhees, buntings and sparrows.
- *Safflower*: squirrels don't care for it, but many birds such as cardinals, grosbeaks and juncos do.
- *Peanuts*: a favorite of woodpeckers, titmice, chickadees, nuthatches and blue jays.

SEEDS FOR A SONG

Saturday, November 9, 2013

Roanoke Valley Bird Club Fund Raiser

In cooperation with Northwest True Value Hardware

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code _____

Email (we will only use it to let you know about next year's Seeds for a Song): _____

If you are not a club member, how did you learn about this sale? Please check one:

Friend _____ TV _____ Newspaper _____ Website/Internet _____ Store's Big Sign _____ Sign in Store Window _____

Description	Quantity	Size	Price/Each (includes tax)	Total
Gourmet Mix		40 lb.	29.85	
		20 lb.	15.80	
		4 lb.	3.65	
Shell Free Mix		25 lb.	21.10	
Black Oil Sunflower		50 lb.	26.90	
		25 lb.	13.70	
		10 lb.	7.10	
Sunflower Chips		50 lb.	75.60	
		25 lb.	43.05	
Striped Sunflower		50 lb.	43.20	
Nyjer (Thistle)		50 lb.	41.70	
		20 lb.	24.05	
		10 lb.	12.60	
Millet		50 lb.	37.80	
		25 lb.	19.35	
Peanuts in Shell		25 lb.	32.95	
Safflower		50 lb.	48.55	
		25 lb.	26.75	
High Energy Suet		1 Cake	1.20	
Ear Corn		6.5 lb.	9.25	
			Total	\$

Mail with check made to **RVBC** • send to Eunice Hudgins, 870 Stonegate Court, Salem, VA 24153 received by October 14



Sightings

9/2/13 Fenwick Mines 8:30 AM, **Barry Kinzie** saw a bird "that I have only dreamed of seeing for FORTY years. I was with **Kent Davis** and **Mike Smith** and we were looking at a whole bunch of 'warblers'....more than ten species. All of a sudden I locked on a bright yellow classic adult male **Lawrence's Warbler**. We all three got extended great looks at the bird several times in the following 15 minutes. Wow...very exciting."

September 9 Membership Meeting Reported Sightings

Robin Jordan and **Martha Pillow** saw a Great Horned Owl and a Pileated Woodpecker.

Robin Austin saw an unidentified hawk carrying a squirrel.

Fred Cramer saw a Great Horned Owl go after a squirrel, but the squirrel got away.

Jill Overstreet saw a Northern Harrier, a Coopers eating a House Finch, and a pair of hawks hunting together.

Carol Whiteside had a hawk around her bird feeders, but her birds escaped.

Butch Kelly heard a Bobwhite calling near his home where a neighbor has established Bobwhite habitat.

Sherri Krantz had a hummingbird in her garage.

Barry Whitt tracked down a Black-throated Blue that he heard while visiting Mount Rogers.

Dan James saw a Blue-winged Teal.

Bob Miller saw a California Condor while travelling.

Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers hybridize where ranges overlap. Hybrids may vary considerably from parent species in the amount of black on head and throat, amount of yellow below, and size and color of wing bars. There are two main types, the more frequent "Brewster's Warbler" and the rare "Lawrence's."



BIRDS OF THE BLUE RIDGES, JAN-FEB 2014 Ed Kinser

The next session of "Birds of the Blue Ridges", taught by Ed Kinser, will begin on January 4, 2014, 9 AM-noon, at the Bent Mountain Community Center. There will be five classes, each on a Saturday morning, January 4 through February 1. In the event a class has to be canceled, it will be rescheduled for February 8th. The first hour of each class will be a presentation, covering such basic ornithology topics as anatomy, feather structure, behavior, and ecology, with emphasis on bird features that aid in identifying local birds. The second part of each class (approximately 10 AM-noon) will consist of a field trip to find local species. Maximum class size 20.

Registration:

Send a check for \$50 with note for "Bird Class," to: Bent Mt. Center, P.O. Box 22, Bent Mt., VA 24059

BLUEBIRD TRAIL STATS

Tim and Alyce Quinn, and Pam and Elly Wefel, Bluebird Trail Committee

This year's results for the club's three bluebird trails were pretty well average, even with all the wet weather we had this summer. We were happy to host Carolina Wrens twice on the Parkway trail, an unusual species for our boxes.

<i>Blue Ridge Parkway</i>		
Species	Eggs	Fledged
Bluebird	182	140
Tree Swallow	14	8
Carolina Chickadee	16	11
Carolina Wren	7	6

<i>Hanging Rock Golf Course</i>		
Species	Eggs	Fledged
Bluebird	159	129
Carolina Chickadee	7	7

<i>Botetourt Swim and Golf Club</i>		
Species	Eggs	Fledged
Bluebird	169	123
Tree Swallow	11	7

We want to thank all the bluebird trail monitors who worked so hard to make this project a success: Ann and Ray Allen, Susan Anderson-Hodges, Bob and Andy Biggs, Carl Boast, Barbara Bricks, Caryl Connolly, Cris Cowan, Eleanor Dye, Bill and Nancy Fabian, Deborah Ingram, Lily Johnston, Linda Harrison, Dick Hendrix, Fran Hodges, Alice Hylton, Ardy Kidd, Susan Kidd, Elizabeth Knoebber, Anne Markham and her Girl Scouts, Connie Marsh, Carole and Bill Massart, Bob and Sherri Miller, Rita and Jerry O'Brien, Laurie and Scott Spangler, Bill and Anne Tucker, Nancy Verity, and Carol Whiteside. We also thank Eunice Hudgins and Andy Biggs for making reminder phone calls to all the monitors. This year we also had help building boxes and doing some maintenance on the trails, and we want to additionally thank those people: Allen and Robin Austin, George Blonar, Kent Davis, and Norris and Janie Ford.

SPEAKING OF BLUEBIRDS....

Many of you have seen the bluebird boxes out at Greenfield. They are NOT part of our club's system of trails, but they are monitored and the results are sent to the Virginia Bluebird Society, just as ours are. I've been informed by Tom Clifton, the trail's creator, that next summer there will be a need for monitors on the three trails there. I've been in touch with Theodora Evans, the coordinator for the trails, and she tells me this: Trail 1 is a walking loop trail around the lake, comprised of 31 boxes and is just over a mile long. Trail 2 is a longer walking trail of 37 boxes that takes about 1 ¼ hours to complete during the busiest part of the season, and which is easy to get lost on! Trail 3 is drivable and has, she thinks, about 35 boxes on it. If you want to help with any of these trails or would like more information, please call Theo directly at 966-5872.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER LAND TOGETHER

from *The Economist*



LANDINGS are the most perilous parts of flying. Airline pilots have to practice hundreds before they can carry passengers. Even then, they have co-pilots, air-traffic controllers and all sorts of gadgetry to help them. And they do it one plane at a time, on clearly marked runways. Now imagine swarms of aircraft all trying to land together on a small stretch of water with no assistance and no gizmos. The result would surely be disastrous. Waterfowl, however, frequently land in groups on featureless bodies of water, yet they rarely collide. So how do they manage it?

To find out, Hynek Burda, of the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, and his team of 11 zoologists armed themselves with maps, binoculars, compasses and anemometers. With these they observed the landings of nearly 15,000 birds of 14 species belonging to 3,338 flocks scattered across eight countries over the course of a year. The upshot of this ornithological marathon, published in *Frontiers in Zoology*, was a discovery remarkable in its simplicity: no matter from which direction a flock of birds approaches a body of standing water, its members usually land on it in alignment with the direction of the Earth's magnetic field.

That birds have a magnetic sense is well known. It is, for example, one of the tools that allows long-distance migration. And Dr Burda's suspicion that this sense may be involved in collision-avoidance explains why the team carried compasses. So the result was not a total surprise. But besides confirming their hypothesis, he and his colleagues also wanted to know exactly how birds do it.

The latest research suggests that birds detect magnetic fields in two ways. One relies on small pieces of magnetite (a magnetic iron oxide) lodged in their beaks, or inner ears, or both. The other employs a magnetism-sensitive chemical reaction in their eyes, allowing them

to "see" the Earth's magnetic field, probably as bright and dark spots superimposed on their visual fields, rather like the head-up display viewed by a fighter pilot. As a bird moves its head, the spots would shift position, allowing it to steer due north or south. More subtly, they might provide a reference independent of the local terrain from which to calibrate the optimal angle of descent. For this reason, Dr Burda suspected, the eyes would have it over the beak or the ears as the magnetic sense of choice during landing. He and his colleagues therefore looked at sequential photographs of 91 mallard ducks landing, and measured the angles of the birds' heads relative to the horizon.

If collision-avoidance were based on normal visual cues, they reasoned, the ducks would sometimes look around to see where their neighbors were. Instead, every bird kept gazing forwards in exactly the same direction (due magnetic north or south), during all four phases of a landing: approaching with wings up; approaching with wings down to act as air-brakes; gearing (ornithologist-speak for popping out their landing gear, i.e., their feet); and touchdown. But the ducks also held their heads at a constant angle to the horizon, which would not be necessary if they were merely using the spots to steer ahead. It would be important, though, if the spots also regulated their angle of approach.

The immobility of a mallard's head when it is landing does not prove it is using its magnetic vision to steer, but it is certainly consistent with the idea. At the least, the birds' agreement to land facing north or south makes collisions unlikely. If their magnetic sense also helps them all descend at the same angle, that would make the chance of them bumping into each other almost zero. How that angle is agreed on has yet to be determined. But even when it is, the most intrepid of human pilots are still unlikely to give it a try.

Calendar of Events

Linda Cory, Field Trip Chairman, 580-5214



SEPTEMBER

1 Harvey's Knob Hawkwatching Sept. 1 – November 15, 10AM – 4PM

Birders gather from the beginning of September until mid-November to count and watch for hawks and other raptors at the Harvey's Knob overlook located at mile marker 95.6 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Bald eagles, ospreys and other hawks can be seen. In past years, thousands of broad-winged hawks have been spotted in a single day. People of all birding skills are welcome to stop by and enjoy the hawkwatching. Come and stay all day or just briefly. Don't forget to bring a lawn chair and something to drink and/or eat. For more information contact **Bill James: 563-9248** or email **BIJAMES@GMAIL.COM**

OCTOBER

5 The Beaver Pond, Saturday, October 5, 7:30 AM

Meet **Kent Davis (344-8377)**, **Mike Smith (345-1081)** and **Eunice Hudgins (389-4056)** at the Orange Market in Hanging Rock at 7:30 AM to carpool for a trip to "The Beaver Pond" in Craig County. This beautiful private property offers varied habitats. If you prefer, you can sit on the porch or under the trees in the huge yard and still see lots of birds at the feeders and flying by. Bring a jacket for this higher elevation, your lunch and something to drink.

9 Sparrow Walk Field Trip, Wednesday October 9, 8AM

Meet **Barry Kinzie (992-2743)** at Greenfield in Botetourt County to look mainly for sparrows, but anything that flies (including butterflies). **Directions:** From exit 150A on I-81, travel north on 220 past the town of Daleville. Take the entrance to the Greenfield Education and Training Center (across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation). Park at the SECOND parking lot for the Cherry Blossom Trail on the right. The trip involves mostly flat walking for about 2 miles. This is a chance to bird with an excellent birder and author of *Birds of the Roanoke Valley: An Annotated Checklist*.

11 Timothy Spira 7:00PM guest speaker at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke, (2015 Grandin Road SW, at the intersection with Brandon Avenue) sponsored by the Roanoke Group of the Sierra Club. Tim Spira is a Biology professor at Clemson University. He is the author of a fabulous book that our own Bill Hunley says, "Is one of the best natural history books I have seen." His book is entitled Wildflowers and Plant Communities of the Southern Appalachian Mountains & Piedmont. The book explains in very easy to understand language why our communities are so diverse. You are invited to bring a snack to share for the social time before & after the presentation. For more information contact **Dan Crawford** at **dbcrawford@cox.net** or **540-343-5080**.

12 The Big Sit! Saturday, October 12 (rain date Sunday, Oct 13)

Join us at **Tim and Alyce Quinn's (719-0109)** house in Burnt Chimney for this 24-hour stationary bird watching adventure. The Big Sit! is an annual, international, noncompetitive birding event hosted by *Bird Watcher's Digest*, sponsored by SWAROVSKI OPTIK, and founded by the New Haven (CT) Bird Club. Every team that observes this year's "**Golden Bird**" has a chance to win \$500. The event has been referred to as a tailgate party for birders. It works like this: You sit inside a 17-foot diameter circle and count all the bird species you see or hear within a 24-hour period. Although the count starts at one minute after midnight the morning of October 12, the Quinns suggest you arrive any time after 7:30AM. If you'd like to come earlier or even camp out the night before to catch some nocturnal birds, just let the Quinns know so they can tell you where the two circles are, 'cause they probably won't be out yet! Bring sun screen, binoculars and, if you can, a dish to share for lunch.

Directions to 681 Edgewood Farm Lane, Wirtz, VA: Take 220 South from Roanoke, turn left at the Bojangles/Dairy Queen gas station South of Boones Mill onto Wirtz Road. Go about 5 miles and turn left where the road ends onto Rt. 122 (Booker T. Washington Highway). Go 1 mile and turn right onto Burnt Chimney Rd. (Rt. 670), go 1 mile and turn right on Kingston Rd. (Rt. 868), go about .8 mile and turn right onto Edgewood Farm Lane. Go to the end of the road, bearing right (DO NOT turn onto Turkey Run Lane). Watch for the address, #681, on a bluebird house at the beginning of the driveway. You can also take Rt. 116 from Roanoke over Windy Gap. When it ends at Rt. 122, make a right and a quick left onto Burnt Chimney Rd. and then follow the above directions. If you get lost, call Alyce's cell (312-6844).

14 RVBC Meeting, 7:00 PM, Featured program: Sex in the City: The Reproductive Behavior of Radford's Bluebirds with Judy Guinan, a behavioral ecologist in the Biology Department at Radford University. **Deadline to submit Seed Orders!** And bring unwanted cleaned feeders for the sale.

NOVEMBER

9 Seed Sale Northwest True Value Hardware, 2303 Williamson Road (near Hollins University). This is the Club's major annual fund raiser and we would greatly appreciate your support. Tell your friends, relatives, neighbors and spread the love of nature. You don't have to be a club member to purchase our bird seed. To submit orders the **deadline is October 14**.

***If you would like to volunteer to help set up, keep track of orders, visit with the public, or load bags, please contact Alyce Quinn: twoquinns@yahoo.com or phone 719-0109. Please bring any old, unwanted bird feeders to the sale or to the October meeting for resale donation, just make sure they're reasonably clean. Please bring refreshments to share which are always appreciated!

11 RVBC Meeting, 7:00 PM



The Roanoke Valley Bird Club
 c/o Eleanor Dye
 P.O. Box 74
 Vinton, Virginia 24179

Reminder: Dues are due!



The Roanoke Valley Bird Club

Roanoke, Virginia

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

All memberships expire on August 31

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

How did you hear about the club? _____

- Student \$ 7 _____
- Individual \$12 _____
- Family \$20 _____
- Adopt-a-Bluebird \$15 _____
- Sustaining \$30 _____
- Additional Contribution \$ _____
- Total Submitted \$ _____

Mail with check payable to RVBC
to:

Eleanor Dye
 P.O. Box 74
 Vinton, VA 24179

Inside This Issue

Page	
1	RVBC Quinn Luau photos
2	Identification and Information
2	President's Message
3	"Winter Finch Forecast"
4	Meet a Member, Mike Smith
4	Who Gives the Hoot!
4	New Members
5	Seeds for a Song information
6	Seeds for a Song form
7	Sightings
7	Bluebird Report
7	Birds of the Blue Ridges class
8	"Birds of a Feather Land"
9	Calendar of Events
10	Membership

Next Issue *November*
 Deadline:
October 20