



# November 2007 Newsletter

*Celebrating 50 Years  
of Birding! 1957-2007*

## INSIDE:

**Fund Raiser  
Raffle: Framed  
Audubon  
Prints.....2**

**Seed Sale on  
November 3rd...2**

Board Notes.....2

Field Trips.....2

Field Notes.....2

Sightings.....3

Bluebird  
Stats.....4

Shade-Grown Coffee  
Benefits  
Songbirds.....5

On Birds And  
Nature  
Rock Pigeons  
Evolved from Wild  
Population.....5

## OCTOBER MEETING

October's program was presented by Sandra Breil from Farmville, Virginia, a volunteer for Earthwatch.



Earthwatch funds about 150 projects a year and all are paid for by the fees volunteers pay to work with scientists who are doing field research around the world. You don't need any special skills to be a volunteer,

just enthusiasm and a willingness to lend a hand.

Volunteers work on projects ranging from banding penguins in South Africa to mapping water supplies in northern Kenya. One advantage to participating in Earthwatch projects is the chance to visit private land or restricted areas that tourists would not have an opportunity to see.

Sandra has worked on many projects and has taken many photos along the way. Sandra showed slides of birds in Australia, Galapagos, South Africa, Trinidad, and Peru.

For more information about Earthwatch visit [www.earthwatch.org](http://www.earthwatch.org)



## NEXT MEETING:

**November 12, 7:00 p.m.  
Grandin Court Baptist  
Church**

## NOVEMBER MEETING

Peggy Spiegel, a longtime member of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club who formerly owned *For the Birds*, a nature/birding store with locations in Blacksburg and Roanoke, will present her program *Land Below the Wind*. Now retired, she volunteers her time working on the *Important Bird Areas Technical Committee*, serves as Field Trip Chairman for the New River Valley Bird Club and Co-Chairs for the VSO.

Retirement has meant the opportunity to travel to some of the richest birding spots in the world. This past July she spent three weeks in Borneo and a week in Peninsula Malaysia. She will share this trip with us in her program

Borneo, the world's third largest island, is home to fascinating endemic species of birds including the Bornean Bristlehead; and many mammals including the Orangutan, and the Proboscis Monkey. Peggy will show a video highlighting the countryside, its wildlife, and displays of animal behavior. The video provides footage of the birds at a famous British hill station, and in a lowland rainforest in Tamen Negara National Park.

Please join us for dinner before the meeting at 5:30 p.m. at the Brambleton Deli at 3655 Brambleton Road.

### ATTENTION: 2008 Annual Dues

If you have not paid your 2008 dues, this will be your last newsletter. We don't want to lose you as a member in good standing. If you receive a hard copy of the newsletter and you see a "07" next to your name, please complete the form on the back of the newsletter and send it and your check to our Treasurer, Eunice Hudgins. Her address is on the back of the newsletter.

Reminder emails will be sent to all those who receive electronic copies of the newsletter and who have not yet paid their 2008 dues.

## ***Fund Raiser Raffle: Framed Audubon Prints***

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Connie Marsh has donated two beautiful, framed prints published by the National Park Service that the club will raffle off at our November Meeting. **There is still time to purchase tickets at the November Club meeting. If you have already purchased raffle tickets please remember to bring them to the November meeting.**

## ***Seed Sale on November 3rd***

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The Roanoke Valley Bird Club Seed Sale will take place at Northwest True Value Hardware between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 3rd at:

**Northwest True Value Hardware  
7650 Williamson Road, Roanoke VA 24019  
(540) 362-2112**

**The store is in the Hollins area, located about a half mile south of the entrance to Hollins College.**

***Please note this is a different location from last year.***

Shade-grown coffee (see article on page four) will be available for purchase at the Seed Sale.

If you would like to volunteer with setting up, keeping track of orders, or loading bags please contact Elly Wefel by email ([pewefel@aol.com](mailto:pewefel@aol.com)) or phone (977-0636).

## ***BOARD NOTES***

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### ***Vote For Club Officers On November 12***

The Club's nominating committee has recommended the following members for officer positions:

President: Elly Wefel  
VP (Programs): Bill Grant  
VP (Membership): Eleanor Dye  
Treasurer: Eunice Hudgins  
Secretary: Connie Marsh  
Field Trips: Beth Griffin  
Directors at Large: Alyce Quinn and Bob Miller

Voting for officers will take place at the November 12 meeting. Please attend!

## ***Electronic Delivery of Club Newsletter***

Approximately 45 club members have opted to receive electronic delivery of the newsletter. If you have not yet requested electronic delivery and wish to receive an electronic copy only, please send your request to [cesiler@yahoo.com](mailto:cesiler@yahoo.com).

***We will gladly continue to mail hard copies of the newsletter to all members who wish to receive it via the USPS.***

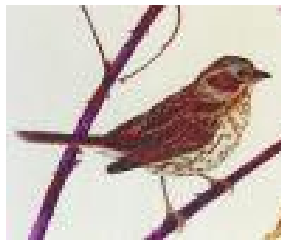
## ***FIELD TRIPS***

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**CHAIRMAN                      BETH GRIFFIN 265-4853**

***DON'T FORGET TO SHARE THE COST OF GAS WHEN YOU CARPOOL***

### ***November 10, 8:00 AM, Eagle Rock Area***



Meet leader Bill Hunley (774-2397) at the Bojangles at Botetourt Commons on Rt. 220N off I81, exit 150B.

Bill will lead an exploration of the Eagle Rock area, including Salisbury Furnace and Eagle Valley Farms.

We will be looking mostly for waterfowl and may get lucky and see a Bald Eagle. Expect some level walking.

### ***November 17, 8:00 AM, Lick Run Greenway***

Club member Rupert Cutler (345-7653) has been walking and birding the Lick Run Greenway Trail in NW Roanoke since it opened over a year ago. He has seen 63 species in this rich urban habitat and he has generously offered to lead a trip for us. Expect about two miles of level walking (although those who wish to continue farther may do so). We will walk through woods, fields, and a marsh.

To get there, take the Orange Ave. West exit off 581, then take the first right onto Burrell and enter the first turn-off on the left into a parking lot. If you pass the pool you have gone too far.

# FIELD NOTES

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## October 13, Searching for Sparrows

Thirteen birders joined Bill Hunley on a sunny morning at the Botetourt Center at Greenfield. Highlights included: Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ovenbird, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Field Sparrow, Palm Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, Kingfisher, Wood Duck, American Coot, Green-winged Teal, Pied-billed Grebe, Red-winged Blackbird, Downy Woodpecker, and Red-tailed Hawk.

The group also visited Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center and noted White-crowned Sparrow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hermit Thrush, Pine Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, and Hairy Woodpecker.

## October 14, The Big Sit! Results

Alyce and Tim Quinn graciously hosted a relaxing day of bird watching. The Quinns and club members provided lots of great food and terrific company.

Over the course of 24 hours the watchers spotted 32 species.

Highlights included: Great Horned and Screech Owl heard in the early morning hours; Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hairy Woodpecker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Kingfisher, Red-shouldered Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.



The following club members pledged money for the Big Sit! We greatly appreciate their donations.

Diane Crampton, Carl and Linda Boast, Pat Andrews, Deborah Ingram, John and Eunice Hudgins, Pam and Elly Wefel, Liz and Dick Cole, Tim and Alyce Quinn.

If you wish to make a donation to the club for the watchers' Big Sit! efforts please send a check to Eunice Hudgins with a note stating that the check goes toward the Big Sit!

## September 21, Kiptopeke Challenge at Harvey's Knob

by Mike Purdy

We tallied 53 species, helped by a large fallout of warblers. Mixed flocks of 15-20 would move through and disappear only to be replaced by another group. At times the trees surrounding the parking lot were full of warblers, vireos, tanagers, grosbeaks and goldfinches. We

counted 14 species of warblers and could have located additional species if we could have eyeballed each bird. Thirteen species of raptors helped to boost the count even more. Thanks to all who participated. Anyone who wants to make a donation to the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory please make a check out to CVWO and mail

it to Mike Purdy at the following address. I will forward it to Brian Taber, president of CVWO.



Mike Purdy  
7221 Scarlet Oak Dr.  
Roanoke, VA. 24019

*Highlights included:* Black-throated Blue Warbler,  
Magnolia Warbler, Blackpoll

Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Downy Woodpecker, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-eyed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blackburnian Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Broad-winged Hawk, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Pine Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Black & White Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Black Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Harrier, Merlin, Bald Eagle, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Peregrine Falcon.

*Participants:* Tad Finnell, Baron and Tina Gibson, Tim and Alyce Quinn, Carol Siler, Roger Reynolds, Allen and Robin Austin, Toni Pepin, Bill James, Bill Adams, Dillard Childress, and Mike Purdy.

## SIGHTINGS

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Butch Kelly saw a Woodcock in early October in Catawba.

Robin Austin spotted an Osprey and several Red-breasted Nuthatches in the Bent Mountain area in early October.

Carl Boast and Norma Shapiro saw four Common Loons on Smith Mountain Lake.

Bob Miller and Mary Lou Agee have seen Dark-eyed Juncos, and other members were still spotting (early October) Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

At the Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center Barry Kinzie reported sighting eight Black-capped Chickadees, a good numbers of Screech Owls, Ravens, Flying Squirrels, Coyotes, and Fox.

On October 22, Mike Purdy and Norris Ford observed a juvenile or female Anhinga at Harvey's Knob on the Blue

Ridge Parkway. The bird was first seen soaring in a thermal over the Bedford Co. side of the Parkway. As it gained altitude, and left the thermal, it headed due north flying over Botetourt Co. and out of sight. The upper level winds were straight out of the south all day.

At Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center on October 17, Barry Kinzie spotted his first Winter Wren of the season. He had also recently sighted over 25 Red-breasted Nuthatches at the feeders.

On a rainy October 26, Mike Purdy observed the following:  
*At Carvins Cove:*

Common Loon - 4, Ruddy Duck - 45, Lesser Scaup - 3  
Red-breasted Merganser - 1, Horned Grebe - 2, Pied-billed Grebe - 1, American Coot - 30, and Bonaparte's Gull - 3.

*At The Botetourt Center at Greenfield:*

Canada Goose - 210, Ruddy Duck - 58,  
Ring-necked Duck - 16, Green-winged Teal - 1, Blue-winged Teal - 4, Mallard - 31, Gadwall - 2, Wood Duck - 1, American Coot - 9, Pied-billed Grebe - 8, Kingfisher - 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1, Dunlin - 28. (The Dunlin flew in, circled the pond a few times, couldn't find a mudflat to land on due to high water levels, and left.)

*At Murray's Pond in Roanoke County:*

Blue-winged Teal - 2, Green-winged Teal - 1, Blue-winged Teal - 2, Green-winged Teal - 1, Gadwall - 4, Ring-necked Duck - 1, Mallard - 13, Wood Duck - 10, Ruddy Duck - 1, Canada Goose - 2, Pied-billed Grebe - 3, Rough-winged Swallow - 3, and Kingfisher - 1.

*At The Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant:*

Dunlin - 4, Greater Yellowlegs - 2, Lesser Yellowlegs - 1, Killdeer - 2, Mallard - 24, Northern Shoveler - 8, and Black Duck - 1.

## **Bluebird Trail Stats**

*Tim and Alyce Quinn/Pam and Elly Wefel*

We had an interesting year on our bluebird trails. For the first time since we took over as chairmen of the trails eight years ago, we had a Tufted Titmouse try her hand at nesting, but none of the eggs hatched. We usually get only bluebirds in our boxes at Hanging Rock Golf Course, but this year we had one successful Tree Swallow attempt. Maybe more Swallows will follow next year.

The Parkway and Hanging Rock Trails both had significantly fewer Bluebird eggs laid than were laid last year (possibly the drought meant fewer bugs available for feeding hungry nestlings), but on the Parkway a greater

percentage of the eggs hatched and fledged, resulting in a better success rate. The success rate at Hanging Rock dropped a bit. Strangely, Botetourt Country Club actually produced more Bluebird eggs and young than last year. Could be the Bluebirds found the boxes before the Tree Swallows, because we had half the number of Swallow eggs there this year. Most of them fledged, however.

Twice as many Chickadee eggs were laid on the Parkway, but not all of them fledged. So even though we produced more Chickadees, our success rate was still lower than last year. The Parkway had fewer Tree Swallow eggs this year, but a higher percentage made it to fledging. The result was a nearly identical success rate. Confused yet? Here's the numbers:

### *Blue Ridge Parkway*

<i>Species</i>	<i>Eggs</i>	<i>Fledged</i>	<i>Success Rate</i>
Eastern Bluebird	170	143	84%
Carolina Chickadee	22	17	77%
Tree Swallow	43	36	84%
Titmouse	4	0	0%

### *Hanging Rock Golf Course*

<i>Species</i>	<i>Eggs</i>	<i>Fledged</i>	<i>Success Rate</i>
Bluebird	137	109	80%
Tree Swallow	5	5	100%

### *Botetourt Country Club*

<i>Species</i>	<i>Eggs</i>	<i>Fledged</i>	<i>Success Rate</i>
Bluebird	118	101	86%
Tree Swallow	30	28	93%

We couldn't possibly take care of all these boxes without the terrific volunteers who help us monitor throughout the spring and summer, so join us in thanking Ann Allen, Bob and Andy Biggs, John Cutler, Marshall Daniels, Eleanor Dye, Bill Grant, Polly Holloway, Deborah Ingram and her daughter Sarah Christenbury, Lily Johnston, Ardy Kidd, Susan Kidd, Connie Marsh, Carole Massart, Bob Miller, Joe Riggins, Jeanne Marie Sawtelle, Bill and Anne Tucker, and Holly Woodson.

We also thank Dawn Gill and Eunice Hudgins for making reminder phone calls to all the monitors. It's easy to forget it's your turn!

Get in on the fun next year by becoming a monitor. We start signing people up in March. Thanks everyone for a great year!

## Shade-Grown Coffee Benefits Songbirds

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(Shade-grown coffee will be available for sale at the RVBC Seed Sale on November 3rd)



Coffee grown in the shade of trees, rather than on land cleared of vegetation, provides habitat for a variety of bird species such as warblers, vireos, orioles, grosbeaks, hummingbirds, and tanagers.

Shade trees provide natural mulch, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers. The trees protect the coffee plants that grow beneath them from rain and sun, help maintain soil quality, reduce the need for weeding, and aid in pest control. Organic matter from shade trees reduces erosion, and contributes nutrients to the soil.

Research has shown that shade-coffee agriculture supports about as much avian biodiversity as do natural forests. Other investigations, especially where shade-coffee farms were adjacent to undisturbed natural forest (serving as a buffer for the forests), have produced similar encouraging results.

To find bird-compatible coffee:

- Look for Arabica coffee with a shade-grown label.
- If you can't find a shade label, look for an organic Arabica coffee which is about as beneficial for habitat conservation because it is difficult to produce coffee outside a shade environment without the use of chemicals. *Organic* is a far stricter term than *shade-grown*.
- Another designation, *fair-trade coffee*, may be a good choice. Fair-trade coffee brings a good return to those who pick and process the beans, and an estimated 80 percent of fair-trade coffee is shade-grown.

The internet addresses below may help you find sources of shade-grown coffee:

- [http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Conservationandscience/Migratorybirds/Coffee/Bird\\_Friendly/default.cfm](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Conservationandscience/Migratorybirds/Coffee/Bird_Friendly/default.cfm)
- [www.rainforestalliance.org/programs/agriculture/shop/index.html](http://www.rainforestalliance.org/programs/agriculture/shop/index.html)
- [www.seattleaudubon.org/shadecoffee](http://www.seattleaudubon.org/shadecoffee)
- The American Birding Association's Song Bird Coffees produced through the Thanksgiving Coffee Company is available via mail-order: <http://americanbirding.org/resources/shadecoffee/index.html>

from *BirdWire* an e-newsletter from the publishers of  
*Bird Watcher's Digest*

## ON BIRDS AND NATURE

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### Rock Pigeons Evolved from Wild Population

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If it were not for human intervention, pigeons, (now officially named Rock Pigeons), that we see on city streets and nesting in rural farm buildings, might still be found only in the wild. Centuries ago, they nested, untamed, on rocky cliffs anywhere from Norway, Russia, and China to western Europe, the Gold Coast of Africa, Egypt; they were in the Mideast to India, Ceylon, and Burma; now also, West Indies, Hawaii, North, Central, and South America.

The Audubon Society's *Encyclopedia of North American Birds* provides some fascinating facts about the Rock Pigeon. It was domesticated about 6,000 years ago but the earliest proof is in terra-cotta figurines from Iraq about 4500 BC.

At first, man raised Rock Pigeons for their meat, and later, for their homing and message-carrying ability. It is said that the Romans used them to carry back to Rome the news of Caesar's conquest of Gaul; also, that word of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo reached England by carrier pigeon four days in advance of the news carried there by horse and ship.

Pigeons flew the results of the Olympic games throughout Greece, and by the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, there were pigeon postal services that the public could use for a fee.

In more recent times, the American forces in World War I used about 5,000 carrier pigeons to relay messages to the troops. In World War II, they were highly useful in modern warfare, and 36,000 American pigeons served overseas. One of the most famous, "G. I. Joe," received a medal for saving an allied-occupied Italian village from bombing.

Pigeons were introduced into the New World by the French in Nova Scotia in 1606 and brought into Virginia in 1621. Homing pigeons, guided by the sun or earth's magnetic field, can find their way to their home lofts from a few hundred to several thousand miles.

In America, the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) did not recognize Rock Pigeon as a feral species until about 35 years ago. Following the AOU guidelines, we were allowed to count them on the Christmas Bird Count for the first time in 1971. They are an introduced species, like House Sparrows, European Starlings, and House Finches.

Pigeons are somewhat of a nuisance in North America, but without the intervention of mankind, they might still be flying wild and free almost anywhere in the world.

Yulee Larner  
Reprinted from the Staunton News Leader

