

# The Roanoke Valley Bird Club



Celebrating  
66 Years of Birding  
1957-2023

Next Meeting:  
September 11, 7:00 pm  
Roanoke Council of  
Garden Clubs

[www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com](http://www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com)

RVBC NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2023

## PRESIDENT'S PICK BIRD OF THE MONTH

Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*)



PHOTOGRAPHED BY  
**DICK GRUBB**

May 4, 2023  
Greenfield Park in Salem, Virginia

"This little bird was very cooperative, staying in just one area of Greenfield that very few birders go, and making herself very available. I was fortunate to see the bird, but really didn't know what I was looking at when I first saw her. I thought I was getting a good photo op with a female Eastern bluebird. It was only after I got home and was looking through the photos that I realized this was something special, just at the right place at the right time! Lots of other birders from as far as North Carolina, Northern Virginia and Richmond came to get a look at her, and eBird flagged her as rare for this area."



### **Western Bluebird** (*Sialia mexicana*)

In open parklands of the American West, brilliant blue-and-rust Western Bluebirds sit on low perches and swoop lightly to the ground to catch insects. Deep blue, rusty, and white, males are considerably brighter than the gray-brown, blue-tinged females. This small thrush nests in holes in trees or nest boxes and often gathers in small flocks outside of the breeding season to feed on insects or berries, giving their quiet, chortling calls.

~ The Cornell Lab



## Drew's Musings ...

Carol asked if I would write a short "ditty" for the newsletter each month, and just like running for President, after much arm-twisting, I agreed. At my age I tend to find myself musing quite a lot, but my doctor would probably call it something else!

It's easy to recall your childhood, and I vividly remember going birding armed with my *Herbert Zim Field Guide*. I couldn't afford binoculars, but it didn't matter as I would spot a bird in the distance and slowly slip up on it. I guess I wasn't much of a threat, so they continued to go about their business while I hurriedly thumbed through my field guide for an id. My how things have changed! We have eBird that provides a list of what is typically seen in our area; *Merlin* to aid in bird calls and provide pictures of birds for quick id. Back then, while I was working on what Kent Davis calls "the regular suspects," my mind was sharp and I had instant recall. Today, however, my learning curve is much steeper! The biggest problem is, my memory isn't what it used to be, and it takes a while before my recall works!! I try to add one or two birds to my memory daily in hopes I will be able to recall them again tomorrow! Be safe and good birding, until next month...

President Drew Daniels  
540.314.6069  
ddaniels2627@cox.net

## \* NO MORE ZOOM MEETINGS \*

### MEETING REFRESHMENTS REQUESTED

Since we will be meeting in house, please volunteer to bring snacks to a meeting, the more the merrier! Consider October or November, with the board providing the refreshments for the September meeting, you are also welcome to bring something then. Please sign-up during the September meeting or notify Mary Lou. Thank you.

Mary Lou Barritt, Refreshments Chair  
540-354-6004 or barritt.mary@gmail.com

Next Meeting:

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 7:00 PM**

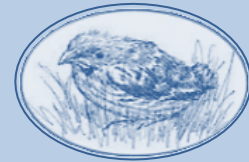
Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs facility, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018

Featured Program: **"Robins to Raptors"**  
with **Dr. Robyn Puffenbarger**

Dr. Puffenbarger will present her program "live" focusing on common and uncommon Virginia birds, and will bring along her travel collection of fully feathered bird skins. This will allow all of us to examine, up close, our favorite creatures on earth!



Robyn Puffenbarger received her Bachelor of Science in biology from Virginia Tech and a Ph.D. in molecular immunology from the Medical College of Virginia. After a post-doctoral research fellowship at SUNY-Stony Brook, she joined the faculty of Bridgewater College. She is professor and chair of the Department of Biology and Environmental Science. Robyn teaches ornithology, genetics, and intro biology courses. With her husband Bill, they bird watch in the yard and all over the world, having seen birds on four continents. Robyn is a Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener since 2011 and loves learning more about native plants to support wildlife.



## Welcome New Members!

Sarah Allison  
Caleb Amstutz & Family  
Genie Butler & Family  
Michael Dorsey  
Roger & Ellen Holtman  
Melba Ramos  
Luke Riley  
Ilett Rosalind  
Tom & Kari Sebens  
Emily Shipley  
Marianne Wilder

## CONTACT US!



## ROANOKE VALLEY BIRD CLUB

P.O. Box 20405  
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA 24018

Email: [rvbc2015@outlook.com](mailto:rvbc2015@outlook.com)

[www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com](http://www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com)

### RVBC OFFICERS

Drew Daniels, President  
David Frye, VP/Programs  
Mary Harshfield, VP/Membership  
Betty Burke, Secretary  
Carol Whitt, Treasurer

### RVBC COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Carol Whiteside, Bluebird Trails  
Kirk Gardner, Field Trips  
Mary Lou Barritt, Meeting Refreshments  
Carol Whiteside, RVBC/BRWS Annual Picnic

The RVBC Newsletter is published monthly **September through May** with the deadline for each issue on the **20<sup>th</sup> of the month** prior to that publication.

Thank you!  
**Carol Whiteside**  
Newsletter Editor

540.774.2143  
[whitesidemules@yahoo.com](mailto:whitesidemules@yahoo.com)





# Who Gives the Hoot!

Reminder

## DUES ARE DUE!

Memberships expire on August 31  
Individual \$15, Family \$25, Student \$10  
Mail checks to:  
Roanoke Valley Bird Club  
P.O. Box 20405, Roanoke, VA 24018  
Or bring to the September 11, meeting  
(Include membership form on last page 6)

## CLUB BYLAWS VOTE DURING SEPTEMBER MEETING

The Bylaws Committee of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club has been very busy this spring and summer updating our Club's bylaws. Bylaws are formal written documents that set out the rules by which an organization is governed. RVBC's bylaws had not been updated since 2014, and a lot has changed in the birding world and the Club since then.

These amendments were approved by RVBC's Board of Directors at our mid-summer board meeting. All members of the club in good standing also received a copy of the new, revised bylaws mid-summer as the bylaws require us to send the proposed changes to membership at least 30 days in advance of voting to give membership time to review the changes and ask questions.

These revised bylaws will be ratified by a majority vote at our first fall meeting, September 11. We hope everyone has had a chance to look the bylaws over, and we look forward to seeing you in a couple weeks when we will have our formal vote!

Roanoke Valley Bird Club Bylaws Committee  
Maxine Fraade, chair  
Robin Austin  
Betty Burke  
David Frve

## THANK YOU NATHAN ANDERSON

for  
Seven years  
of  
Researching,  
Time consuming,  
Dedicated  
Work in Editing  
The RVBC Newsletter



## BEWARE OF BEARS

Bears are being reported everywhere – cities, country farms, neighborhoods, highways, parks, orchards, forests and grasslands, including where we enjoy birding! They are attracted into our yards by the smell of garbage, grills, dog food, cat food, bird food, even our bird houses and bluebird nest boxes.

The bluebird website [www.sialis.org/bears.htm](http://www.sialis.org/bears.htm) offers suggestions if you encounter this bear problem with bluebird nest boxes.

The National Park Service has issued the following alert which is posted throughout the Blue Ridge Parkway:

“Bear activity has been reported by hikers in this vicinity. Visitors must properly secure food at all times on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Never leave food unattended. Properly dispose of all trash in dumpsters.

**Never feed bears! Keep all pets leashed!**

If you encounter a bear, **do not run**. Calmly back away and leave the area immediately.”

For more detailed information:

[www.nps.gov/blri/planyourvisit/bear-safety.htm](http://www.nps.gov/blri/planyourvisit/bear-safety.htm)



## CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU, KENT DAVIS

In appreciation for Kent's ten years serving as president of the RVBC, a white oak tree was planted in Highland Park near his home to honor him.

Terry McGuire invited Kent Davis, Drew Daniels and Carol Whiteside to Highland Park to discuss the prospects of creating a bluebird trail there. Terry plans to present this idea to Roanoke City.



# Calendar of Events

Kirk Gardner, Field Trip Chairman, (828-216-9710)

*Note: if inclement weather necessitates a cancellation, an e-mail notification will be sent out. You may also call or text the leader. Please do not call any of the trip leaders after 8 pm the night before the field trip, in consideration of having to get up early the next day to lead the field trip.*

*Thank you.*



## SEPTEMBER 2023

- 1 Harvey's Knob Hawkwatching August 15 – December 1, anytime from daylight through dark.**  
Birders gather from mid-August through December to count and record data of the hawk migration at Harvey's Knob overlook, located at mile post 95.6 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Bald eagles, ospreys and many other raptors can be seen. Thousands of broad-winged hawks have been spotted in a single day, usually between September 15 and 26, as recorded in previous years. People of all birding skills are welcome to stop by and enjoy the hawkwatching; extra eyes are always needed. Come and stay all day or just briefly. Don't forget to bring a lawn chair, binoculars and something to drink and/or eat. For more information contact: **Bill James, 540-563-9248 or email [bijames@gmail.com](mailto:bijames@gmail.com)**
  
- 11 RVBC MEETING, Monday 7:00 PM.** Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs facility, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018. Featured Program: "Robins to Raptors" with Dr. Robyn Puffenbarger. (Details on page 2.)
  
- 13 Second Wednesday Midweek Walk – Botetourt Center at Greenfield, 8:00 AM. Leader David Frye (248-459-6783)**  
Join us 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.
  
- 16 Green Hill Park, Salem, Saturday 8:00 AM. Leader Kent Skaggs (308-627-5414)**  
We will be looking for fall migrants while we walk up to 2 miles along the greenway near the Roanoke River. Wear good walking shoes or waterproof boots in case we leave the path. **Directions:** From West Main Street, Salem, take at left at Diuguids Road. In less than 1/2 mile, cross over the Roanoke River, and take the next right onto Green Hill Park Road. Park in the first parking lot on right.
  
- 24 Glade Creek Greenway, Sunday 7:30 AM. Leader Kent Davis (540-355-6388)**  
This greenway is currently an easy 0.6-mile paved path on flat terrain to the end of the trail, parallel to Glade Creek in the Town of Vinton. Hopefully we will see some migrants. For those who want to bird more, then we can walk the Tinker Creek Greenway to the Roanoke River. This greenway links Tinker Creek Greenway at Virginia Avenue to bicycle and pedestrian facilities on Walnut Avenue, and will soon reach to Gus Nicks Boulevard. Ultimately, this greenway will connect to Gish Mill to Vineyard Park in Roanoke County. Currently, parking is available at the Tinker Creek Greenway parking lot on Dale Avenue. **Directions:** From Roanoke take Dale Ave SE ( Rt 24 ) east toward Vinton. You will pass Walmart on the right and go under the train trussell to make an immediate right into the Tinker Creek Greenway parking lot.

## RVBC CALENDAR



Available  
September 10  
Through  
January 6  
**\$16**

Contact The Calendar Committee  
[rvbc2015@outlook.com](mailto:rvbc2015@outlook.com)

As a club fundraiser, the production of our 2024 calendar is underway. The photos are exceptional this year! The plan is to have the calendar available for sale at the meeting on September 11. The price will remain the same at \$16 each. We will offer pick-up dates at the RCGC (Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs) facility, and a mailing option will also be available. Be on the lookout for more information coming to your email with a sneak peak of the calendar, and how to receive it. We are always looking for places to sell our calendar and your suggestions are welcome at [rvbc2015@outlook.com](mailto:rvbc2015@outlook.com) .





## Field Trip Report

**4/29/23** On a nice, spring-like day, Tim and Alyce Quinn led a small but enthusiastic group of nine birders up Warbler Road, with a few stops in Arcadia on the way. Some of the best of the 46 species for the day were: Wood Duck, Northern Harrier, both Oriole species, four types of vireos and ten warbler species including Worm-eating, Hooded, Ovenbird and Cerulean. We also saw the ever-popular Scarlet Tanager.



## Roanoke Valley Bird Club and Blue Ridge Wildflower Society



### 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Picnic July 15, 2023

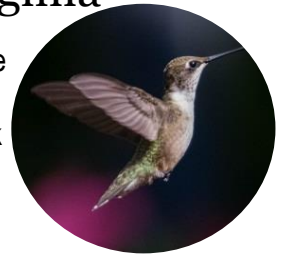


There were 62 attendees this year, more than we have ever had; in comparison, last year's attendance (following the pandemic) was 42, which we thought was great at that time. This increase was likely due to the change of date in favor of a summer picnic instead of in September. Interestingly, in the attendance were 33 RVBC members, 19 BRWS members, 8 members of both clubs, with 1 guest and 1 unknown. The Wildflower Club provided barbeque, the Bird Club brought fried chicken and everyone delivered the most delicious sides, salads and desserts. Many thanks to everybody for making this a fun social event and very successful!



## ROBIN AND ALLEN AUSTIN'S HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL Saturday, August 5, 2023 ~ Bent Mountain, Virginia

Twenty-seven people attended Robin's morning bird walk; the most we have ever had on this walk, she said, spotting 36 species of birds! One of the best sightings was a small kettle consisting of a red-tailed hawk, a red-shoulder hawk and a broadwing hawk. There were at least 50 people enjoying the pot-luck picnic of abundant nourishments with Allen working the hot dog and hamburger grill to perfection. The hummers did not disappoint, buzzing through the Austin's manicured gardens and their feeders in outstanding numbers while everyone mingled and savored the gorgeous day while feasting.



Photography by:  
Betty Burke (bird walk above)  
Bill Tucker (hummers and flowers)  
Carol Whiteside (picnic people)





Roanoke Valley Bird Club  
P.O. Box 20405  
Roanoke, VA 24018



# Roanoke Valley Bird Club

## Membership Application/Renewal Form

Memberships expire on August 31, each year

2024

(Current Year)

Please print

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\*Email \_\_\_\_\_

\*Required to receive newsletters and communications

Annual Dues are as follows:

- Individual \$15
- Family \$25
- Student \$10

Additional Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Adopt a Bluebird \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Payment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to:  
**Roanoke Valley Bird Club**

Mail To:  
Roanoke Valley Bird Club  
P.O. Box 20405  
Roanoke, VA 24018

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com