



April '17 Newsletter

Celebrating 60 Years of Birding
1957-2017

NEXT MEETING

Monday, April 10th at 7PM
Grandin Court Baptist Church
2660 Brambleton Ave. Roanoke, VA 24015

(Join fellow club members for dinner at 5:30PM at Brambleton Deli; 3655 Brambleton Ave.)

American Robins: Our (Un)Common Bird

Presented by Maureen Eiger

Robins are probably the most recognizable bird in America. We take them for granted, and most of us don't really know that much about their life. Can you tell the difference between male and female birds or who's who, by the unique markings on the bird's face?

This program will shed some light on how and where they go to migrate and why. You will discover how robins are altruistic birds, and the unique personality each bird has. Learn about their diet and how they seem to find earthworms so easily.

This program is will let you in on some unique and surprising facts about our American Robin so even the most knowledgeable birder may learn something new.

Maureen Eiger is the RVBC's past Vice President and Board Member. She is a State and Federally Permitted Bird Rehabber and the Director of Help Wild Birds (Roanoke's only nonprofit wildlife rehabilitation organization that exclusively handles migratory birds.) Robins are the most frequent species of bird that ends up in rehab. So please bring a roll of paper towels or donate a box of tissues to help save some baby robins.



SIGHTINGS

Linda Cory — Black Phoebe, Yellow Billed Magpie
in Sacramento, California

Toni Pepin—Brown Thrasher

Dick Hendrix—Bald Eagle in New Jersey

Sissy Logan—Osprey

Mary Lou Barrett—3 Rusty Black Birds

Ashley Peele—Indigo Bunting

Bob Crawford—Pair of Red Bellied Woodpeckers



Field Trip Reports

2nd Wednesday Walk (3/8)

Barry Whitt led a small group that braved the cold on this trip. Species seen mirrored the previous month's walk with waterfowl including Ring-Necked Ducks, Blufflehead, Coots, Common Mergansers, Pied-Billed Grebe and the resident Belted Kingfisher.

Woodcock Walk (3/18)

We had 18 folks for the field trip. We had a total of 20 species which was really good considering the time of day and the chilly, windy weather. A few of the highlights were Broad Wing Hawk, Meadowlark, and Wood Duck. It was finally dark enough by 7:45 PM that we saw and heard Woodcock. By then we all were freezing but very happy we had our target bird.



UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

(For any additional information please contact Linda Cory at 540-580-5214 or RVBC2015@outlook.com)

Locher Tract, Arcadia and Solitude Swamp, Sat., April 1st, 8AM

Join Educator Bill Hunley (774-2397) at 8AM at Botetourt Commons for an interesting field trip to Locher Tract, located in the Jefferson National Forest. This is a managed wildlife habitat that contains woods, open fields, a beaver pond and good views of the James River. We can expect a good variety of birds, including early migrant warblers, Wood Duck and Fox Sparrow. Locher Tract is near Natural Bridge Station in Rockbridge County. There will be 1-2 miles of level walking. We will then visit the Arcadia area and nearby Solitude Swamp. This field trip includes some of our club's favorite birding spots. We will meet in the parking lot near the Bojangle's drive-in (5 Kingston Dr, Daleville, VA).

Work Day at Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center, Sat., April 8th, 8:00AM

This is an annual event that promises to be fun birding along with the work. Join Barry Kinzie 540-309-4353 at 8AM to Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center for a morning of clean-up and maintenance of the nature trails. All are welcome to bring a picnic and stay for the remainder of the day, birding and exploring the nature center. Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center Directions: From I-81, take Exit #150B. Turn left on US 11 North and follow it 2.6 miles to Rt. 651/Stoney Battery Road in Troutville. Turn right and follow 0.9 miles to Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center (#941) on the left

WARBLER ROAD, Sun., April 23rd at 7:00am

Meet leaders Tim and Alyce Quinn (312-6844) near the Bojangles at Botetourt Commons in Daleville. We will bird a series of forest service roads between the Blue Ridge Parkway and Arcadia in search of warblers and other Neotropical migrants. This trip usually lasts into the afternoon so bring drinks, snacks and a lunch. Dress in layers and be prepared to carpool as pull-offs are limited.

LITTLE SPRING DAY AT FINCA ALOHA - Sun., April 30th 7:30am

If you're not birded out from Big Spring Day, join Tim and Alyce Quinn (312-6844) starting at 7:30 AM at their house in Burnt Chimney for a morning of looking for spring migrants and resident birds. They have a variety of habitats including woodland trails, a pond, scrub and open fields, and their property list includes over 130 species. Wear sturdy shoes as the footing is rather uneven. If you don't want to hike, there's a big deck and lots of chairs where you can relax and do some stationary birding. If you'd like to stay for lunch, bring a dish to share. Keep an eye out for Eurasian Collared Doves as you pass the Burnt Chimney Elementary School on your way. The Quinns' address is 681 Edgewood Farm Lane, Wirtz, VA 24184. From Rt. 220, take a left on Rt. 697 by the Dairy Queen/Bojangles (about 5 miles south of Boones Mill). When it ends, go left on Rt. 122. Go one mile and turn right onto 670 (Burnt Chimney Road). If you're coming from Rt. 116, when it ends at Rt. 122, make a right and then a quick left onto Rt. 670. Whichever way you come, once you are on Rt. 670, go one mile and turn right onto 868 (Kingston). Go about .8 miles and make a right onto Edgewood Farm Lane (at a bunch of mailboxes). Go half a mile down this gravel road. When the road makes a 90 degree left turn onto Turkey Run, DON'T TURN. Instead you want to go straight. This is the beginning of their driveway, and there is a bluebird box here with their house number on it on the right of the driveway, and several old trailers on the left. You can't see the house from here, but go a quarter mile down the driveway and you're there.

CLUB NEWS

Bird of the Month - Ruby Throated Hummingbird

Ruby-throated hummingbirds usually return to the Roanoke Valley in mid-April and stay until early October. Although the ruby-throat is our main hummingbird, the rufous and or Allen's (jointly known as selasphorous) hummingbirds may visit our area other times of the year. Hanging a sugar-water feeder for them is easy to do. Choose a location near a bush or tree for coverage. Remember to rinse and scrub out the feeder (no soap or clorox) and change the sugar-water every few days. Include an ant trap which can be purchased or made – see picture.

Recipe: boil 4 cups of water and then dissolve 1 cup of sugar, cool well before putting in feeder. No food color, honey or artificial sweeteners (yes, it's been done).

Hummingbirds are about the weight of a penny and their brains are about the size of a BB. Being the smallest bird in the world, they have the record for the smallest eggs. Ruby-throated hummingbirds have one of the highest nesting success rates of any neo-tropical migrant.

Hummingbirds can't walk, but they do have the record for the fastest wingbeats and they can fly in any direction. Many migrate across the Gulf of Mexico non-stop. To see the arrival dates of ruby-throats go to <http://www.hummingbirds.net/map.html>.

Scientists have recorded hummingbirds drinking twice their body weight per day, lapping up nectar 12 times per second. In most species, their tongues are the same length as their bills AND female Hummingbirds' tongues are longer than the males. They eat insects and love spiders and spider eggs. I sat in amazement one time watching a ruby-throat tap into a mud dauber (wasp) cocoon and lap out the contents – yum. I have also observed ruby-throats diving into a swarm of gnats eating them “on the wing”.

By: Linda Cory

FUN FACTS:

There are 18 hummingbird species in North America.

Hummingbirds are found nowhere else in the world except North, Central, and South America.

It is neat to see ruby-throats in Costa Rica during the winter months, knowing that they are they could be in your own back yard in the spring.

There are over 325 species total, making them the second largest bird family in the world, second only to flycatchers.



NPR Program on 89.1 with Terry Gross

For those that like Terry Gross's Fresh Air program, she recently interviewed wildlife photographer Gerrit Vyn and essayist Scott Weidensaul bird calls and discuss some of the remarkable abilities of birds. You can hear and/or read the interview at <http://www.npr.org/2015/10/20/450038490/flights-of-fancy-exploring-the-songs-and-pathways-of-the-living-bird> and click on the arrow in the upper left hand corner of the webpage.

Big Spring Day - Saturday, April 29, 2017

Our Big Spring Day bird count is scheduled around late April and early May to coincide with the annual peak of bird activity. Migrating birds are passing through on their way north. Local birds are in the midst of breeding which makes them more active, vocal and easier to observe in their bright spring plumages.

Saturday, April 29th will be the 47th Big Spring Day bird count co-hosted by the Lynchburg and Roanoke Valley Bird Clubs. We will be out that day, rain or shine, to count birds in a 15-mile diameter circle centered on the Big Spring in the Peaks of Otter picnic area. Teams will count birds on their assigned routes all morning and meet at noon at the Peaks of Otter picnic area for the tally-up. Bring your picnic lunch and something to drink. After lunch, teams may go back and finish their territory, search for a reported rarity or just call it a day and head home. Jim Elder, the Lynchburg Coordinator, will compile and distribute the final report by email.

Please join us for a fun day of birding. It's an opportunity to meet new birders, discover new birding territories and, maybe, see a bird you have never seen before. We always hope to surpass the 143 species recorded in 1977! To participate, contact Barry Whitt at 540-309-4353 or Carol Whitt at 540-632-6523 or you may email us at 540carolc@gmail.com . We will assign everyone to their territories and provide all of the information you will need for the day. If you participated in a team last year, your party leader will contact you in April to establish a meeting time and place.



Help Wanted!

We are looking for birders to give a short presentation at ECO Camp this July. Kathy Scott, with Blue Ridge Foothills and Lakes Master Naturalists, is putting together a day camp for 7-12 year olds at Booker T Washington NM. The theme this year is "Nature's Disappearing Act", as in water can flow underground and disappear and how birds and their nests are camouflaged. (That kind of disappearing, not becoming extinct) The camp would last 3 hours in the morning and would be on each Saturday in July. The birding presentation, about 45-minutes in length, could touch on how birds hide their nests in tall grasses (appropriate at Booker T for the Grasshopper Sparrows that nest there), and where do birds go at night, and about migration into and out of the area, etc. Kathy was hoping for some hands-on activities for the kids. She has accumulated black walnut shells and was thinking about making owl heads out of them. Or, bring along any abandoned nests you might have, or build nests from dry grasses, etc. There would be 12 kids, max, in each group. You would have to make the presentation twice each morning. Do you have a Saturday morning, or two, to spare for the young naturalists of tomorrow? Let me or Kathy know. Thanks, Anne Tucker (billt3256@gmail.com) and Kathy Scott (digginitinva@jetbroadband.com)



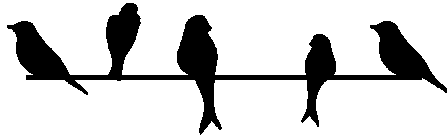
Earth Day Festival

We Need Volunteers for the Bird Club Booth! Saturday April 22 is the 28th annual Roanoke Earth Day Festival! Since 1990 the Roanoke festival has been raising environmental awareness and promoting green practices. This year its moved downtown to Elmwood Park, hours from 9 AM to 2 PM. The Bird Club booth needs YOU! We start set up at 8 AM and we must be out by 3 PM. We need volunteers to staff the booth in one hour shifts anytime between - of course you can take more than one shift! Please call or email Maxine Fraade maxinefr@aol.com or 989-3961 to sign up. And if you have any ideas for handouts or things to do at the booth - we'd love to have them. PS I cannot be at the April meeting so please contact me directly about volunteering or with your ideas.

WESTERN ATLAS REGIONAL TRAINING—Sat., April 15th

This session will include morning bird walks in the Blacksburg area, followed by an eBird and data entry workshop at Torgersen Hall on the VA Tech campus. Local Atlas volunteers will be leading the morning walks and will focus on tips and strategies for collecting breeding information while birding. We have limited space for this event, so please register today to secure your spot at this event!

For registration, please click here:<https://goo.gl/forms/N4ObEtUhMTGkleGn2>



RICHMOND AUDUBON SOCIETY TO HOST 2017 VSO ANNUAL MEETING

We are planning to host a number of field trips to some of our favorite spots. By the first weekend in May, there's a very good chance that the James River Park system will be teeming with many of the migratory species that make their way through our area every spring. You can expect the field trips to touch on a number of our hot spots in the James River Park System in Richmond, which spans some 550 acres right in the heart of the city of Richmond. You can learn more about it by clicking here: <http://jamesriverpark.org/>

Urban birding won't be our only option, either. We have field trip leaders eager to show off the many wonderful spots in the central Virginia area that our members regularly enjoy. We'll have a full list of trips as we get closer to the Annual Meeting. We're also working on a line up of excellent speakers and presenters for the weekend. We are also planning a silent auction. If you have an item that you'd like to donate, please contact me at president@richmondaudubon.org. If you are interested in having a vendor table, or know of someone who might be interested, please also contact me at that address.

In the meantime, if you are looking to make your plans for the Annual Meeting, the Wyndham has agreed to a nightly rate of \$124 for a single (including breakfast), or \$134 for a double (including breakfast for two). To make a reservation, call the hotel at (804) 727-1400 or 1-888-444-6553 and identify yourself as a member of the Virginia Society of Ornithology group to get the reduced rate. On behalf of the members of the Richmond Audubon Society, we are looking forward to hosting you in May 2017 and showing off all the wonderful reasons why Richmond is for bird lovers!

Eileen Geller
President, Richmond Audubon Society



Roanoke Valley Bird Club
c/o Eleanor Dye
PO Box 74
Vinton, VA 24179

2017 Roanoke Valley Bird Club Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Memberships expire August 31st.

Annual Dues	
Individual \$12	_____
Family \$20	_____
Student \$7	_____
Sustaining \$30	_____
Adopt a Bluebird \$15	_____
Additional Contribution	_____
Total Payment	_____
Make check payable to the Roanoke Valley Bird Club c/o Eleanor Dye Box 74 Vinton, VA 24179	