



# December Newsletter

Next meeting Monday  
December 14th, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Grandin Court Baptist Church  
2660 Brambleton Ave SW. Roanoke, VA 24015

Before the meeting please join fellow club members at 5:30 p.m.  
for dinner at the Brambleton Deli, 3655 Brambleton Ave.

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**Deadline for submissions to be included in the next RVBC newsletter** are due on the 20th of the month preceding the publication month. **Thank you!**

Please send photos (in medium resolution or smaller) and submissions or suggestions to RVBC Newsletter Editor, Maureen Eiger at [rvbcnews@cox.net](mailto:rvbcnews@cox.net)

**Hyperlinks** have now been added. You can click on the underlined link and it should take you there. Use it for sending email or to get internet and website information. Visit our web page for past newsletters and current information at: <http://www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com>

**NEW!** - Visit and "like" the Roanoke Valley Bird Club's Facebook page.

Celebrating 58 Years of Birding!  
1957-2015

## MEMBER NIGHT

Show off your photos and share your stories of your birding adventures. Contact Maureen (540) 342-4890 to secure your slot. This month's meeting refreshments will be graciously provided by **Roanoke Valley Bird Club Members – bring a dish to share!**



**Updated information and current field trips for the 2016 VSO Annual Meeting can be found on our website**  
<http://www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com>

Limited space is available for anyone who would like to reserve a table for an exhibit or as a vendor at the meeting. The 6' skirted tables rent for \$20 for the entire weekend. Contact Robin Austin at 540-929-5222 or [robinrvbc@yahoo.com](mailto:robinrvbc@yahoo.com) for more information.

**The RVBC 2016 Calendar is still available for sale at the meeting. The perfect gift for your bird loving friends.**

**Don't forget to sign up at the meeting for Christmas Bird Counts**

**A Bird Word**-Do you know what a **CRECHE** is? Hint: It generally occurs among birds that breed in large, loose colonies and whose eggs all hatch at about the same time. Answer is on page 5.



**DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> SECOND WEDNESDAY BIRD WALK AT GREENFIELD AKA CHERRY BLOSSOM TRAIL MEET AT 8:30 A.M** - Meet leader Barry Kinzie at the second parking lot on the right across the road from the lake at 8:30 A.M. for a special walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield. We will walk around Greenfield Lake in search for waterfowl and songbirds. The walk will be mostly flat walking for about 1 1/2 miles. There are benches along the trail for "birding from the bench" as well as more adventurous walking up to the grassy area overlooking the lake or the trail down to the lower pond. Bring your spotting scopes! Greenfield is located on Route 220 in Botetourt County. Directions: Take Exit 150B on I81 and then a right onto Route 11 for a quarter mile. Take a right onto Route 220N. Go 3.8 miles and take a left at the entrance to the Greenfield Education and Training Center (across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation).

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS** are not a new idea or limited to the Roanoke Valley Bird Club. The first count was done on Christmas Day 1900 by Frank Chapman, an ornithologist in New York, as an alternative to hunting birds. The count is a census of birds in the Western Hemisphere performed in a "count circle" with a diameter of 15 miles. The count period runs from December 14 to January 5. Observers count every bird seen in assigned areas. All counts are forwarded to the National Audubon Society to provide population data for use in science, especially conservation biology. The RVBC does three counts and you can participate in as many counts as you wish. Contact the leaders to be assigned a territory. If you are a new birder or have not done this before, you will be placed with experienced birders. Get to know your fellow birders and maybe discover a new territory or a new bird. It's a fun day, full of bird watching and comradery!

### **ROANOKE – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19**

Contact Leader: Bill Hunley at [wjhunley@gmail.com](mailto:wjhunley@gmail.com) or call 774-2397 (H) or 467-3477 (C)

### **FINCASTLE – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20**

Contact Leader: Eunice Hudgins at [uvaau@aol.com](mailto:uvaau@aol.com) or call 389-4056. Following the Fincastle count, we will meet at Woodpecker Ridge for a bowl of Barry's soup and a tally of birds seen on the Roanoke and Fincastle counts

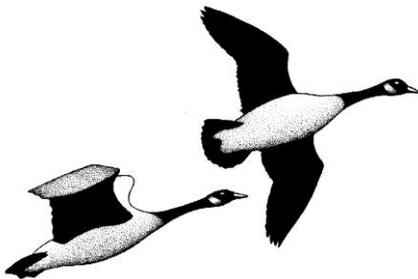
### **PEAKS OF OTTER – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27**

Contact Leader: Kent Davis at [kedjr@cox.net](mailto:kedjr@cox.net) or call 344-8377.

**NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD COUNT** – Place of YOUR choosing on Friday, January 1st from 12 AM to 11:59PM Start your 2015 out right by making a New Year's Day Bird List at the place of your choosing. This is not a group field trip and is not a competition. Also, this is not a national organized count and there is no fee. Some of our members for years have made it a personal tradition to start their year by listing the birds seen/heard on the first day of the year. Maybe this will be the start of a new tradition for you, too! Make a note of all bird species seen and/or heard beginning midnight of New Year's Eve (which would officially be January 1st) and ending 11:59PM of January 1st. You may bird anywhere you would like (even Florida). Email your resulting list with where you birded, the time of day and all participant names to: Linda Cory at [lcory50@juno.com](mailto:lcory50@juno.com) Highlights from your lists will go in the February newsletter. Good luck everyone and Happy New Year!



Photo by Maureen Eiger



### **POND HOPPING - SATURDAY, JANUARY 16 AT 9:30 A.M.**

Meet leaders Tim and Alyce Quinn (719-0109) at Botetourt Commons (BoJangles) at 9:30 a.m. We will carpool to various ponds in the area in search of waterfowl. Expect easy walking and please bring a scope if you have one.

### **ANNUAL RAPTOR COUNT - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2016**

What a great way to spend Valentine's Day with your sweetie!! Plan to spend a few hours driving away the winter blues on Saturday, February 13, 2016. The annual Raptor Count is a great excuse to get out of the house and do some winter

birding!! No skill required just a little time and effort. We count all the hawks that we can find. Just a reason to get together with your birding buddies and enjoy a winter outing!! The form and more details will be in the February newsletter.

## Events, Projects and Club News

### **VSO ANNUAL MEETING sponsored by the Roanoke Valley Bird Club, APRIL 29 - MAY 1, 2016** **Meeting registration deadline - April 19 (Pre-registration required) Special lodging rate deadline - April 8**

Ah, spring birding in the mountains and valleys of Roanoke. Come experience it for yourself. We are lucky to have a diverse assortment of habitats that attract a wide variety of migrant and resident birds. From yellow-crowned night-herons and Louisiana waterthrushes on our local streams to cerulean warblers on our mountaintops, from grasshopper sparrows in our fields to ovenbirds in our forests—the Roanoke area has it all. There will be a few field trips offered Friday afternoon (pre-registration required; descriptions can be found below) and lots more on both Saturday and Sunday mornings. There will be stationary, driving, and hiking trips of varying degrees of difficulty so you can choose one that's right for you.

Pick up your registration packets and sign up for Saturday and Sunday's field trips beginning Friday afternoon. Enjoy the hors d'oeuvres and cash bar that evening while you browse through the vendor tables and peruse the items up for bid at our silent auction. Then attend the short business meeting, which will be followed by the ever popular and always entertaining Jerry Via of the New River Valley, with his program entitled "Birds of the Roanoke Valley and Mountains." This program will help familiarize you with what species we are likely to encounter.

After a morning of birding on Saturday, relax at the hotel while visiting the vendor tables and attending a series of short lectures at the papers session in the afternoon. That evening you can again enjoy the hors d'oeuvres and cash bar, mingle with friends you seldom see, and maybe even make some new friends. You won't want to miss the banquet Saturday night, featuring Pete Dunne as keynote speaker. In his program, "Small-Headed Flycatcher," Pete will recount the rediscovery of a bird believed extinct (if it ever existed at all) whose discovery was claimed by both Alexander Wilson and John James Audubon, and this dispute lies at the heart of the discord between these twin pillars of American Ornithology. The yarn has a modern as well as historic focus and will be enjoyed by birders and non-birders alike. Pete will be doing a book signing at the banquet, and Buteo Books will have an assortment of his books available for purchase, or you can bring one from your own collection. If there's a particular book you're looking for, contact Buteo Books at [customerservice@buteobooks.com](mailto:customerservice@buteobooks.com) or 434-263-8671.

Sunday morning there will be more field trips to attend as we wind up the weekend's activities.

How would you like to win a chance to go birding with Pete Dunne on Saturday? He has agreed to let us raffle him off for a fun morning of easy birding. You can purchase as many raffle tickets as you'd like using the registration form. At the close of registration, we will draw the winning tickets and notify the winners. You must register for the weekend's events and the banquet by April 19 using the registration form below in order to attend. Your registration fee covers all your activities for the weekend except for meals. Breakfasts and lunches are on your own, and the Saturday night banquet must be signed up for separately on the registration form. With prior notice, the hotel can provide box lunches to take with you on your field trips. More information on that will be forthcoming on the RVBC web page.

The Sheraton Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center at 2801 Hershberger Road will be our base of operations. You do not have to stay at the hotel to attend the meeting, but everything other than field trips will happen there. The hotel has set aside a block of rooms for us at the special rate of \$99.00 plus tax. That rate will be available for 3 days prior to and 3 days after the meeting for those who wish to come early or stay on after the conference to experience more that the Roanoke area has to offer. Rooms must be reserved by April 8 to take advantage of this special rate. To receive the special group rate, attendees should identify themselves as part of the Virginia Society of Ornithology 2016 Annual Meeting. Reservations can be made directly online at <https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/events> You can also reserve a room by calling the hotel central reservations number (800-563-3535) or the hotel directly at 540-563-9300 Find out more about the hotel, such as their pet friendly offer and their Make a Green Choice option, at [www.sheratonroanoke.com](http://www.sheratonroanoke.com).

All field trips will start in the Sheraton parking lot. Saturday and Sunday trips (which you will sign up for when you arrive at the hotel) will start between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. Descriptions of these trips, including target species for each, are listed at the Roanoke Valley Bird Club website at [www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com](http://www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com). Friday field trips will start between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. Trips will have a maximum number of participants and are on a first come, first served basis. Sturdy waterproof shoes are recommended for many of the trips. Target birds for the weekend include cerulean and a myriad of other warblers, blue grosbeak, bald eagle, osprey, brown-headed nuthatch, red-headed woodpecker and ruffed grouse.

Saturday and/or Sunday trips will include Arcadia and Solitude Swamp, Bent Mountain and Poor Mountain, Booker T. Washington National Monument and Smith Mountain Lake Community Park, Claytor Nature Study Center, Explore Park, Falls Ridge Preserve, Fenwick Mines and Craig Creek, Johnson Farm and Peaks of Otter area, Lick Run Greenway, Ponds of Botetourt County, Smith Mountain Lake State Park Boat Trip, Warbler Road, Finca Aloha, the Sewage Treatment Plant and the Roanoke River Trail.

Join the Roanoke Valley Bird Club for a fun weekend of birding our lovely mountains and valleys. Questions about the field trips can be answered by Linda Cory at 540-580-5214 or [lcory50@juno.com](mailto:lcory50@juno.com). Any other questions about the event can be directed to Alyce Quinn, General Chairman, at [twoquinns@yahoo.com](mailto:twoquinns@yahoo.com) or 540-719-0109.

**To register, fill out and mail in the form on the next page.**



# VSO Annual Meeting April 29-May 1, 2016 Registration Form



Please print names as they should appear on nametags

Name 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Name 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Name 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Name 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fee: \$40 x \_\_\_\_\_ (# attending) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Banquet: \$36 x \_\_\_\_\_ (# attending) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate number for entrée choice: Pork: # \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken: # \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian: # \_\_\_\_\_

**Win a chance to bird with Pete Dunne Saturday morning! Purchase as many tickets as you want. Couples who both want to bird with him should purchase couples tickets. Winners will be notified prior to the meeting.**

Singles ticket: \$10 x \_\_\_\_\_ (# raffle tickets) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Couples ticket: \$20 x \_\_\_\_\_ (# raffle tickets) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount enclosed (registration, banquet, and Pete Dunne raffle tickets) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Make check payable to: Roanoke Valley Bird Club

Mail completed form and check to:

VSO 2016 Annual Meeting  
Norris Ford  
3322 Kingsbury Circle  
Roanoke, VA 24014

For Annual Meeting inquiries, contact Alyce Quinn at [twoquinns@yahoo.com](mailto:twoquinns@yahoo.com) or 540-719-0109.

## Meet RVBC Member – Barry Whitt

Submitted by Roving Reporter Maxine Fraade



Now that Barry Whitt has generously stepped up to replace long-time club treasurer Robin Austin, *Meet a Member* wants to introduce you our newest board member. Barry's been a member of the club for 2 years joining after he retired as a high school biology teacher at Roanoke Catholic School. Looking for a way to improve his birding skills, he came across the RVBC online. On his very first club field trip to Natural Bridge in May 2014 he saw 73 birds - a record which he has not matched since! Barry's always been interested in the outdoors ever since as a child, a neighbor had an encyclopedia with pictures of birds in it that caught his eye, especially the cedar waxwing. "That was the first bird I fell in love with. I still like them. But it took me a long time to see the first one." He's also a passionate fly fisherman - Montana and Canada are his favorite fishing areas but he says, "If it's alive, I like to know the name of it: wildflowers, butterflies, trees, mayflies..." and clearly birds too.

## SIGHTINGS

### From the RVBC Members attending the November meeting

- ✓ Butch Kelly saw a Northern Harrier at his home
- ✓ Mary Lou Barritt had a late Ruby-throated Hummingbird at some remaining flowers in her yard. She noted this winter may be an irruption year for Snowy Owls.
- ✓ George Blonar saw a Snowy Owl while driving on 495 in DC.
- ✓ Connie Marsh had a Winter Wren in her yard.
- ✓ Kent Davis and Bill Fabian saw Pine Siskins, two Rusty Blackbirds, and a Shoveler at Greenfield.

### Field trips and unusual bird sightings

- ✓ **Greenfield--Botetourt Center -Nov 11, 2015** RVBC field trip led by Janie and Norris Ford, 13 people attended. Highlights: Common Raven, American Black Duck 2, Ruddy Duck, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Gadwall 17, Green-winged Teal 5, Ring-necked Duck, Belted Kingfisher 2, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Towhee 2
- ✓ **Virginia's Explore Park - Nov 21, 2015** RVBC field trip with 15 people, led by Kent Davis. Highlights: Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet 8, Red-winged Blackbird 20
- ✓ **Claytor Lake State Park - Nov 22, 2015** Seen by about 10 members of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club with more people from the New River Valley Bird Club, led by Bill Akers, total 19 species. Highlights: Ring-necked Duck 2, Bufflehead 8, Pied-billed Grebe 4, Double-crested Cormorant 2, Bonaparte's Gull 12, Yellow-rumped Warbler 2, Chipping Sparrow 1, Red-winged Blackbird 2

**A NOTE ABOUT PETE DUNNE:** Pete Dunne was the Director of the Cape May Bird Observatory and founder of the World Series of Birding. He is a contributor to many major American birding magazines, and author of more than a dozen books on birds, birdwatching and bird conservation. He started birding when he was 7 years old. In 2001, he received the Roger Tory Peterson Award from the American Birding Association for lifetime achievement in promoting the cause of birding. Eric Stiles, president of New Jersey Audubon, calls him a "birder, teacher, natural history maven and master chronicler of the natural world." We are glad he will be our 2016 VSO Meeting speaker.



**BIRD WORD ANSWER – CRECHE:** The fledglings of some bird species such as Greater Flamingos, Sandwich Terns, eiders, ostriches, and a number of penguins separate from their parents and form a group, or "**creche**." Whether parents continue to feed their own chicks, or the chicks feed themselves, supervision of the creche is usually delegated to a small number of guardians. The guardians, of course, are related to only a small number of the young in the group. But this day-care system permits a fledgling to lose itself in a crowd and reduce its risk of predation.



Roanoke Valley Bird Club

C/o Eleanor Dye  
P.O. Box 74  
Vinton, Virginia 24179

## 2016 Roanoke Valley Bird Club Membership Application Form

Please print

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

ST: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Memberships expire on August 31 each year*

Annual Dues are as follows:

- Individual \$12
- Family \$20
- Student \$7
- Sustaining \$30
- Adopt a Bluebird \$15

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

Total Submitted \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to  
Roanoke Valley Bird Club  
Mail To: Roanoke Valley Bird Club  
C/o Eleanor Dye  
P.O. Box 74  
Vinton, VA 24179-0074