



December '19 Newsletter

Celebrating 62 Years of Birding
1957-2019

NEXT MEETING

Monday, December 9th at 7PM

**Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs Building
3640 Colonial Avenue Roanoke, VA 24018**

Join fellow club members for dinner at 5:30pm at the Brambleton Deli, 3655 Brambleton Ave.

Members' Sharing Night

As a long-standing tradition, December is Members' Night. This is our night to share our favorite photos, videos or stories of your birding adventures. We will have the club computer and projector set up for you to bring your thumb drive, CD or other media. Paper photos, sculptures or work of art are also welcome. Please email RVBC2015@outlook.com to give us an idea of how many members would like to share during a 5-minute time slot. This month's meeting refreshments will be graciously provided by our Roanoke Valley Bird Club Members, so bring your favorite dish to share!



Great Blue Heron: Nathan Anderson

CLUB NEWS

SEEDS FOR A SONG SALE

A big thank you to everyone who helped out with this year's Seeds for a Song fundraiser. Whether you worked at the sale, brought goodies, or purchased seed, your contribution was much appreciated. We sold 5416 pounds of seed, \$4373 worth, making a profit of \$568 for the board to use for a worthwhile community project. It was a beautiful day and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. So here's a big round of applause for all the volunteers who helped make the sale a success (and if I miss anyone, I sincerely apologize!): Nathan Anderson, Patty Arrington, Robin and Allen Austin, Sid and Mary Lou Barritt, Mary Ellen Belcher, Drew Davis, Kent Davis, Philip Dean, Eleanor Dye, Dick and Donna Grubb, Daphne Jamison, Ardy Kidd, Sissy Logan, Deb McPherson, Diane and Michael Malpass, David Musyt, Jerry and Rita O'Brien, Lourdes Page, Pat Popper, Tim and Alyce Quinn, Judy Repass, Bob and Ellen Rummel, Kathy Sink, and Barry and Carol Whitt.



ROANOKE VALLEY BIRD CLUB CALENDAR

We have sold 74 of our beautiful calendars and have 26 left. They will be available at the December meeting for \$12 each. If you are unable to come to that meeting, please email rvbc2015@outlook.com to make arrangements (especially if you pre-ordered one). You can also visit www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com to order one (or more).

A big thank you goes out to all of our members who cast their vote, to Calendar Chairman, Jack French who did the layout work, to our Webmaster, Carol Siler, the compiler, Linda Cory AND, of course, our talented photographers. The calendars will be available for sale at the December meeting!

NEW OFFICERS RESULTS

New officers were voted in at our last meeting to start their duties on January 1st. A huge, huge thank you goes out to Eleanor Dye who served as Vice President of Membership since 2007. Thanks also goes out to Mary Harshfield who is stepping down from the Board of Directors to take over the chairmanship of Field Trips formerly held by Linda Cory since 2011.

2020 Officers and Board of Directors

President - Kent Davis

VP (Membership) – Diane Malpass

VP (Programs) – Linda Cory

Secretary – Betty Burke

Treasurer - Sissy Logan

DIRECTORS: Nathan Anderson, Patty Arrington, Robin Austin, Mary Lou Barritt, Maxine Fraade, Eunice Hudgins and David Musyt.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

All eyes are needed! For newer birders, you will be placed with experienced birders. It's a chance to get to know your fellow birders and maybe discover a new territory or a new bird. The first count was done on Christmas Day 1900 and is now done in all 50 states and other parts of the Western Hemisphere. The count is a census of birds performed in a "count circle" with a diameter of 15 miles between December 14 and January 5. That information is forwarded to the National Audubon Society to provide population data for use in science, especially conservation biology. As part of Citizen Science, participating in bird counts is in line with our mission statement. Please consider participating in this important activity by contacting the leaders listed below.

Roanoke - Saturday, December 14

Contact Bill Hunley - wjhunley@gmail.com 467-3477

Fincastle - Sunday, December 15

Contact Barry Kinzie peckerridge@intelos.net 992-2743

At noon following the Fincastle count, we will meet at Barry Kinzie's house at Woodpecker Ridge (941 Stoney Battery Rd, Troutville, VA) for a bowl of Barry and Teresa's "Woodpecker Stew" and a tally of birds.

30% OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS LOST IN RECENT DECADES

A widely publicized study first published September 20 in the journal *Scientist* reports that almost 1 in 4, or 3 billion birds, have vanished in North America since 1970 due to human activities - almost 30% of our total wild bird population. It's being called an "overlooked biodiversity crisis".

About 90 percent of the missing birds came from just 12 bird families, including warblers, sparrows, blackbirds, and finches. Common birds like European Starlings experienced some of the steepest drops. Feeder birds like the Dark-eyed Junco declined by nearly 170 million individuals, while White-throated Sparrows dropped by more than 90 million.

Factors include habitat loss and degradation especially grasslands which lost 720 million birds - a 40% decline since 1970 - pesticide use, insect declines, climate change, outdoor cats and glass skyscrapers.

Not all species declined and some such as waterfowl and raptors like the bald eagle showed an increase due to improved wetland conservation and banning DDT.

The research team headed by Cornell analyzed the breeding population of 529 species by pooling data from the North American Breeding Bird Survey, Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service waterfowl surveys, and 10 other datasets. As a side note, this points out how important our own club's bird counts and the Virginia Breeding Atlas are for keeping track of what's happening to birds.

WEATHER POLICY

One third of our members live in areas where ice and snow can be much worse than in the city. A club meeting will be cancelled if either Roanoke City OR Roanoke County schools are closed on that meeting date. We still might cancel a meeting if there is impending weather. In that case, we will endeavor to send out an alert email, so please look at your emails if you are in doubt.

GOT HUMMINGBIRDS?

This month, a Rufous Hummingbird was sited in Montgomery County! Most winters, the Roanoke area gets a surprise visitor or two and if you see any between November and March, report your findings to RVBC2015@outlook.com and/or eBird.org.

Hummingbirds seen in winter months are visitors from the west, usually either a Rufous or an Allen's. Both species breed in the west and migrate to Mexico. It is not known how or why some of them winter in the east, but when they do they are known to stick around a feeder for several days. Until they are properly identified, you may hear the little bird described as *Selasphorus* which is the Genus name that they share. They usually turn out to be a juvenile Rufous although an adult male did visit a feeder on Bent Mountain last winter. Both juvenile and females are difficult to distinguish, but the tail usually tells the tale. Both adults of these species have orange or coppery feathers. Both juveniles and females have green on their backs. The only accurate way to distinguish between Rufous and Allen's in any plumage is by the shapes of the tail feathers. To be sure, you can contact a licensed bander, Bruce Peterjohn (bpeterjohn@usgs.gov, 301-497-5646).

Our traditional Ruby-throated Hummingbird is extremely rare in the winter months. Many birders choose to keep their hummingbird feeders out all winter. Although sugar water keeps fresh longer during cold weather, the feeder should still be changed often. A flood light can be positioned near the feeder to keep it from freezing or you can take the feeder down at night. Good luck!



Allen's Hummingbird: Jerry Via

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

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

DECEMBER 11th, WED., 8AM – SECOND WEDNESDAY BIRD WALK AT GREENFIELD Join Barry Whitt (309-4353) and Annie Downing (520-6027) for a bird walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield. We will walk around Greenfield Lake in search for waterfowl and songbirds. Wear water-proof shoes for this 1.5 mile walk and bring your spotting scopes! Directions: Take Exit 150B on I81 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 the right.

NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD COUNT – Wednesday, January 1st This is a tradition for our club, so we are putting this in our December newsletter to give you a heads up. Start your 2020 out right by making a New Year's Day Bird List at the place of your choosing. This is not a group field trip nor a competition, just a great way to start the year out. If you haven't participated before, maybe this will be the start of a new tradition for you! 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 (Florida?). Email your resulting bird list with the location to RVBC2015@outlook.com . Highlights from your lists will go in the February newsletter.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

November 9—Pond Hopping- Twelve birders enjoyed finding 36 species at Greenfield and Murray's Pond (which was sparsely populated) on this brisk winter morning. Highlights of the day were gadwall, ring-necked duck, one lesser scaup, coot, pied-billed grebe, American black duck, hooded merganser, wood duck, green-winged teal, belted kingfisher, yellow-bellied sapsucker, ruby-crowned kinglet, winter wren, grey catbird, cedar waxwing, white-throated sparrow, eastern towhee, a flock of 150 common grackles, and yellow-rumped warbler.

November 13 – 2nd Wednesday Walk at Greenfield – 10 birders braved a cold, cold day to see some great birds. 36 species were spotted with the highlights being a late-leaving Tree Swallow, Northern Shovelers, American Black Ducks, Green-winged Teal, Pied-billed Grebe and a plethora of Mallards and Ring-necked Ducks. Also seen were both Kinglets, a Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-winged Blackbirds, 2 Great-blue Herons, 30 Yellow-rumped Warblers and a Kingfisher.

November 24 – Afternoon at Claytor Lake

A group of 17 from the Roanoke Valley and New River Valley Bird Clubs enjoyed a great afternoon birding at Claytor lake. The highlight of the day was enjoying the antics of 3 adult and 1 juvenile Red-headed Woodpeckers. Other birds seen were Lesser Scaup, Gadwall, Horned and Pied-billed Grebe, Coots, Bufflehead and 2 Belted Kingfishers. In addition, some birders observed a Bald Eagle, Pileated Woodpecker and a singing Winter Wren.



Roanoke Valley Bird Club
 c/o Diana Malpass
 PO Box 74
 Vinton, VA 24179



2019—2020 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	_____
<p>Make check payable to the Roanoke Valley Bird Club c/o Diana Malpass Box 74 Vinton, VA 24179</p>	