



# May '17 Newsletter

Celebrating 60 Years of Birding  
1957-2017

## NEXT MEETING

Monday, May 8th 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.)

You Will Never Look At The Sky The Same Again

Presented by King & JoAnn Irvin

Approximately 3 to 5 billion North American birds will migrate south in the fall. A large number of raptors will pass through Panama on their way to winter feeding and nesting grounds in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile. Harvey's Knob Hawk Count participates in this fall raptor migration, counting just a few thousand birds each fall.



Just next to the southern locks of the Panama Canal on the Pacific Ocean side and next to beautiful Panama City, sits a small hill just 653 feet high, Cerro Ancon, one of the major hawk counting sights in Panama. Cerro Ancon has a commanding

view of the Panamanian southern coast, the coastal mountain range to the West, the interior mountains to the north, and the city of Panama to the East. Like Harvey's Knob, Cerro Ancon takes part in the great raptor migration count, with single day counts as great as 2 million birds. The birds are almost exclusively Broad-winged Hawks, Turkey Vultures, Swainson's Hawks and Mississippi Kites with far fewer Ospreys, Swallow-tailed Kites and Peregrine Falcons. Black Vultures are not counted, however their numbers are at least as great as the Turkey Vultures. The occasional Northern Harrier, Merlin or Cooper's Hawk wanders by as well. Additional migrating birds such as storks, pelicans and other non-raptor species can be seen.

Blanketed by protected tropical rainforest, Panama is home to diverse wildlife including monkeys, sloths, parrots, toucans and hummingbirds abound around vast blooming forests.

During this presentation, from the vistas of Cerro Ancon, we will visit the 'River of Raptors'. Enjoy the many rainbow colors of some of Panama's most beautiful hummingbirds. In addition witness some spectacular images of other wonderful creatures of Panama.

Explore pictorially this river of raptors, 'You Will Never Look At The Sky The Same Again'.

Presented by King & JoAnn Irvin, naturalist photographers, Central and South American adventurers.

## SIGHTINGS

Mary Lou Barritt: Ruby Throated Hummingbird

Bill Farmer: Tom Turkey

Connie Marsh: Louisiana Water Thrush

Mary Ellen Belcher: Purple Gallinule, Wood Storks, Roseate Spoonbill at the Everglades National Park

Joanne Derryberry: Purple Gallinule; Burrowing owl

Carol Whiteside: Red breasted nuthatch

Kathy Clemo: Bank Swallows at Smith Mountain Lake

Lourdes Page: Eastern Meadowlark

Linda Cory: Broad-winged Hawks

Gwen Firing: 2 Fox Sparrows

Sid Barritt: Pine Warbler, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher at Carvins Cove



## **UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS**

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

### **RVBC Warbler Rd Bird Trip May 7, 7AM**

On Sunday, May 7th, 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. We will meet in the parking lot near the Bojangle's drive-in (5 Kingston Dr, Daleville, VA).

### **Second Wednesday Bird Walk at Greenfield, May 10th, 8AM**

Join co-leaders Barry Whitt (309-4353) and Kent Davis (355-6388) for a leisurely bird walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield. We will walk around Greenfield Lake in search mainly for migrating songbirds. The walk will be 1-2 miles. There are benches along the trail for "birding from the bench". Other walking may be through damp grass to the field overlooking the lake or the trail down to the lower pond. Bring your spotting scopes! Meet at the second parking lot at Greenfield on the right across the road from the lake. 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 Greenfield.

### **Mill Mountain Birding, Saturday May 13th, 8AM**

Meet Kent Davis (355-6388) for a leisurely bird walk at the top of Mill Mountain for migrating warblers and other songbirds. We will meet at the parking lot in front of the zoo entrance and then walk around the top of the mountain including the wild flower garden, access roads and woodland trails. From downtown, travel east (uphill) on Walnut Ave which turns into J. P. Fishburn Parkway. Take a right onto the Mill Mountain Spur. From the Blue Ridge Parkway, exit onto the Mill Mountain Spur at mile marker 120. The address of the Mill Mountain Zoo is 2404 Prospect Rd, Roanoke.

### **Back Creek/Blue Ridge Parkway Bird Walk, SUNDAY, May 14th, 8AM**

Club member Gary Oberlender (529-7566) will host a bird walk on the wooded mountainside behind his home which borders the Blue Ridge Parkway just below the Roanoke Valley Overlook. Habitats will include pine and mixed hardwood forests, open fields, and wooded creek bottoms. Terrain will vary and at times will climb steeply but we will walk slowly and listen carefully for early spring birds. Wear good walking shoes and layered clothing appropriate to the weather forecast and bring water and a snack. The walk will conclude around noon. From Cave Spring Corner (419/Electric Rd. and US 221/Bent Mountain Road), take US 221 south 5 miles towards Bent Mountain. Turn left on Old Mill Road (Rt. 752). You will see Haran Baptist Church on the right. The road will take a left bend to cross the creek. The road will then bend to the right and continue uphill on Old Mill Rd. Turn onto Lawrence Lane and the second gravel drive on the left to park (#7448).

### **Bland County Birding, Saturday, May 20th, 7AM**

Butch and Betty Kelly are leading us to an exciting new location in Bland County. The terrain will include open forest, pastoral settings and a known breeding habitat for Shrikes and Golden-winged Warblers. This is a full day event, so bring a packed lunch, water to drink and other necessities. We will plan to picnic at the Falls of the Dismal on county route 671. We will meet at 7AM and carpool from the Orange Market at Hanging Rock (1823 Thompson Memorial Dr, Roanoke, VA).

## **Mount Rogers to White Top, Saturday, May 27th**

Join Dr. Carol Croy, Forest Wildlife Biologist with the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests for a full day of birding in the Mount Rogers and White Top Mountain area. Mount Rogers is known for being the highest peak in the state of Virginia at 5,728 feet. Although we won't be hiking to the top, we will be visiting White Top Mountain which is known as the highest roadway in the state, over 5,000 feet. This area includes forests, open meadows and riparian habitat. We hope to see several species of warblers including: Canada, prairie, hooded, yellow-throated, black-and-white and Kentucky. Other species to look for are vesper sparrows, alder flycatchers and juncos that nest there in the summer. Meet at 7AM at the Salem Walmart recycle bins in the front/left parking lot at 1851 West Main Street. We will carpool from there. Walking will be 1-2 miles, but the ground may be rocky, so wear sturdy shoes. Dress in layers and bring rain gear, just in case. We will stop at the ranger's station to see the displays and also have access to indoor plumbing. Bring a packed lunch and something to drink. We should return around 5PM.

## **Annual Summer Open House at the Austin's on Bent Mountain, Saturday, August 5th**

Join Robin and Allen Austin (929- 5222) at 8:30 AM for a walk around their property. Wear sturdy shoes for easy to moderate walking. At noon, we will have lunch with the hummingbirds, an amazing sight. Bring a dish to share. From Cave Spring Corner (419/Electric Rd. and US 221/Bent Mountain Road), go south on US 221 for 10 miles to Bent Mountain. Turn right at Bent Mountain Bistro (Rt 612) and then left onto Tinsley Lane. In ¾ miles, turn right on Bottom Creek Rd and the Austin's are 1 mile on the left. The address is 10513 Bottom Creek Road, Bent Mountain, VA.

## **Piney Grove Preserve for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers - May 27**

The VSO and Center for Conservation Biology (CCB) are jointly offering a field trip to The Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve, site of nesting Red-Cockaded Woodpeckers. Bryan Watts from the CCB will be our leader. We are given access to this protected site through CCB's support and the cooperation of The Nature Conservancy. In recent years we have had good views of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, nestlings and nest sites. Meeting time is 5:15 AM at the Virginia Diner in Wakefield. Space is limited, so register early by contacting Lee Adams [atleeloudenslag-eradams@gmail.com](mailto:atleeloudenslag-eradams@gmail.com) or 540-850-0777. There is no planned caravan from Roanoke, but you can ask Lee if others are traveling from our area.

## **A Weekend of Birding in the New River Valley and Surrounds – June 9-11th**

The New River Valley Bird Club will host the VSO summer field trip June 9-11, 2017, featuring some of the best birding areas in the New River Valley and southern Appalachians. Trip leaders Bill Akers and Jerry Via have organized some terrific activities for us! This is a free event although the hotel fees and meals are on your own. Target birds (some nesting) will be Rose-breasted Grosbeak, several species of warblers, Black-capped Chickadee, Blue-headed vireo, and Brown Creeper. Trip headquarters will be the Holiday Inn Express at 1020 Plantation Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Hotel registration deadline is May 8th (540-552-5636) to get the VSO room rate of \$95/night. To register for this VSO event and for more details, visit <http://www.virginiabirds.org/events/field-trip-announcements/> .

## Field Trip Reports

### **Locher Tract – April 1<sup>st</sup>**

Twenty birdwatchers experienced a Fools-free day as they were treated to a great display of birds including a Bald Eagle, Brown Creeper, an early Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, warblers (Pine, Palm, and Yellow-rumped), Raven, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kinglets, Kestrel and a Belted Kingfisher.

### **Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center – April 8<sup>th</sup>**

Thanks to Norris Ford, Sid and Mary Lou Barritt, Kathy Clemo, Bob and Betty Crawford who helped clear trails and the garden area. Kathy reported 22 bird species on eBird noting several species of woodpeckers (Hairy, Red-bellied, Pileated, Downy and Flicker), Red-breasted Nuthatch and Blue-headed Vireo.

### **2nd Wednesday Walk at Greenfield – April 12<sup>th</sup>**

Club members recorded 45 species including Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Osprey, Solitary Sandpiper, Fish Crow, Brown Thrasher, 4 Eastern Meadowlarks and a pair of Belted Kingfishers.

**Little Spring Day** at Finca Aloha was a success with 8 club members participating. 45 species were seen with great looks at Prairie, Cape May and Pine Warblers, Acadian and Great-Crested Flycatchers, a nesting Phoebe, Scarlet Tanagers, Indigo Buntings and a Re-shouldered Hawk. Also seen were White-Eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos, a Great-blue Heron and an Osprey.



**REMINDER THERE WILL BE NO  
MONTHLY MEETINGS DURING THE  
MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST.  
Happy birding over the summer. See you in September!**

## CLUB NEWS

### **BIRD OF THE MONTH - Northern Cardinal**

What bird has sport teams named after it, is present all year in our area and is the most common state bird? The Northern Cardinal. *Cardinalis cardinalis* is the state bird of seven states, including Virginia. The bright red male and tawny female is easily recognizable by their size, stout bill and crest. Both the male AND female are vocal. To hear their call, visit [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern\\_Cardinal](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Cardinal).

Their beauty earns them the number one spot on holiday greeting cards. Male Cardinals are fierce territory protectors and are well-known to attack their reflection in windows and car mirrors. I observed this while working in a glass building which reflected light from different directions. Starting at 8AM, the male cardinals would attack his reflection on the East side of the building, at noon, the Southside and by quitting time, the West side. Although streamers and hawk outlines were added to the windows, he was undeterred.

Cardinals are non-migratory, choosing to tough it out in the severest weather. They commonly visit our bird feeders enjoying sunflower, safflower and millet seeds, but they also eat grasses, and fruits such as sumac, tulip-trees and dogwoods. They also eat insects. One day I observed a showdown between a determined cardinal and a full grown praying mantis. Both were raising and lowering their wings, trying to look taller than the other. I startled the two which then ended in retreat for both.

By: Linda Cory

#### **FUN FACTS:**

They have a fierce bite and are inclined to not let go.

The oldest record for a Northern Cardinal is just shy of 16 years.

Although an eastern species, Cardinals can be found as far west as Arizona and California.

Unlike other species, female Cardinals will sing on the nest, most likely letting the male know it's time for food.

A known mating ritual for the Cardinal is for the male to offer food to the female, beak-to-beak.

The name is derived from the similarity of a Catholic cardinal's red capes and caps.



### **More Birdhouses to Give Away**

More birdhouses will be available at the May meeting. These were donated to us by a woodworker's family who lovingly made them, but the birdhouses need alterations to be bird-friendly. These items are free or you can make a small donation to the bird club. These are on a first come, first serve basis the night of the meeting with members working out between them which item they take home.

### **Save the Date: Annual RVBC Club Picnic**

We will be joining the Blue Ridge Wildflower Club for a picnic on Saturday, August 12th from 4pm to 6pm. The picnic will be at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs at 3640 Colonial Avenue in Roanoke. As tradition has it, our club is providing fried chicken and the Wildflower Club is providing barbecue. Please bring your favorite side dish or dessert to share. Water and Soft drinks will also be provided or you can bring your favorite non-alcoholic beverage. Bring a lawn chair if you choose to eat outside. A reminder email will be sent out closer to the time of the picnic. See you there!

### **You Can Prevent Bird Strikes**

It is always upsetting to have a bird injured due to them flying into your house windows. Most “window strikes” can be prevented easily and inexpensively. Birds are highly aware of raptors (birds of prey), so just tape a raptor silhouette to your window. It should change the bird’s course and avoid an injury or fatality. Hanging a few bright objects the front of the window is also known to divert birds. You can use old CDs or pie tins. For a template of a raptor silhouette and other ideas, visit <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/why-birds-hit-windows-and-how-you-can-help-prevent-it/>.

## **EARTH DAY FESTIVAL**



On April 22nd, many Roanokers stopped by the RVBC display to learn about our club and activities. As an annual event, please consider volunteering for next year's Earth Day and other similar events. It's a great way to get the word out about our club and bird conservation.



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	