



# November Newsletter

Next meeting Monday  
Nov. 14th, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Before the meeting please join fellow club members for dinner  
at 5:30 p.m. 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 written submissions or suggestions to Maureen Eiger, RVBC Newsletter Editor 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  
59 Years of Birding!  
1957-2016

## "Outdoor Cats: A Modern Conservation Crisis"

By Grant Sizemore from the American Bird Conservancy (ABC)



Photo of cat caught robin in rehab by Maureen Eiger

Domestic cats (*Felis catus*) are a non-native species that have been introduced by people into ecosystems around the world. The consequences of these introductions have been dramatic, and these cats are now recognized as one of the most harmful invasive species globally. Not only do free-roaming cats alter environments as an introduced predator, they are also a vector for zoonotic diseases such as rabies and toxoplasmosis. This presentation will focus on the scientific evidence demonstrating the magnitude and pervasiveness of this ongoing conservation crisis, propose effective solutions for management, and highlight American Bird Conservancy's role advocating for science-based policies and strategies that benefit cats, wildlife, and people.

Originally from Ohio, Grant grew up fascinated by nature and enjoying the outdoors. He earned degrees in Zoology and Environmental Science from Miami University and an MS in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation from the University of Florida. Prior to joining ABC, Grant has worked toward wildlife conservation through policy, outreach, education, and years of wildlife research. Outside of work, Grant enjoys hiking, birding, fishing, and taking care of his (indoor) cat.

**"Seeds for a Song" is Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup> at the Northwest True Value Hardware Store, Hollins, rain or shine. Don't forget to pick up your order between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. There will be a small supply of seed available the day of the sale for people that forgot to pre-order.**

**A Bird Word** - Do you know what **avian conjunctivitis** AKA **house finch eye disease** or **mycoplasmal conjunctivitis** is? Why do only house finches seem to get it? What are the symptoms? How can I prevent it? Answers- see page 5.

## Upcoming Field Trips

Field Trips Chair, Linda Cory (540) 580- 5214

### NOVEMBER 9TH, WEDNESDAY at 8:30 A.M. - SECOND WEDNESDAY BIRD WALK AT GREENFIELD



Join co-leaders: Barry and Carol Whitt (309-4353) at 8:30 A.M. for a bird 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". Other walking at the property MAY be limited to construction including the grassy area 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 the Greenfield Education and Training Center, across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation. Photo of common moorhen at Greenfield by Joanne Derryberry.

### NOVEMBER 19TH, SATURDAY at 8:00 A.M. - WHISPERING PINES PARK

Meet Kent Davis (355-6388) and Linda Cory (580-5214) at the Orange Market in Hanging Rock at 8:00 a.m. From there we will be driving 10-15 miles to birding sites in and around Whispering Pines, a Roanoke County Park. This park has been known to produce the trifecta of nuthatches: white-throated, red-breasted and brown-headed. We will also visit some nearby ponds looking for arriving ducks and waterfowl. The Orange Market is located at the intersection of Rt 311 and Rt 419 (1823 Thompson Memorial Drive) Salem, VA.

### NOVEMBER 26TH, SATURDAY at 8:00 A.M. - JACKSON RIVER SCENIC TRAIL

Meet Kent Davis (355-6388) and Barry Whitt (309-4353) at Bojangles at Botetourt Commons in Daleville. We will carpool about an hour to Covington where we will be birding along the Jackson River. The JR Scenic Trail is an old railroad bed that has been re-purposed as a hard-surface trail. After a morning of birding, we will have lunch in Clifton Forge at one of the favorite eateries there. Botetourt Commons is on Rt 220 North off of I81, Exit 150B.



### DECEMBER 3rd, SATURDAY 9AM - STARKEY WETLANDS

Join Linda Cory (580- 5214) at the South County Library on 6303 Merriman Road for a walk on the Starkey Wetlands Boardwalk. We will be scouting possible rails and a variety of sparrows. Wear sturdy shoes for walking from the parking lot to the boardwalk below. The boardwalk is a 1/2 mile of level walking although we will do some additional exploring at Starkey Park next door. If time permits, we could choose to also walk along Crystal Creek.

**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 or heard 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:

#### Roanoke – Saturday, December 17

Contact Bill Hunley (wjhunley@gmail.com / 774-2397 (H) / 467-3477 (C)

#### Fincastle – Sunday, December 18

Contact Eunice Hudgins (uvaau@aol.com / 389-4056)

#### Peaks of Otter – Date to be decided at a later date.

Contact Kent Davis (kedjr@cox.net / 344-8377)



Participate in as many counts as you wish. Contact the leaders above to be assigned a territory. If you are a new birder or have not done this before, you will be placed with experienced birders. There is very little walking on most of the territories – we ride the areas stopping often to look, listen and count the birds. It's a fun day. Get to know your fellow birders and maybe discover a new territory or a new bird.

There will also be sign-up sheets at the November meeting.

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. **PLEASE JOIN US – WE NEED YOUR HELP.**

## Events, Projects and Club News



### SEEDS FOR A SONG SEED SALE – SATURDAY NOVEMBER 5th

Our club's main fundraiser, Seeds for a Song, will be held Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup> at the Northwest True Value Hardware store in Hollins. Don't forget to pick up your order between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. There will be a small supply of seed available the day of the sale for people that forgot to pre-order. Proceeds from the sale will be used for community bird related projects. We thank you for your participation.

### BUY A RVBC CALENDAR ONLY \$12.00. A NICE GIFT FOR BIRD LOVERS!

Our 2017 Bird Club calendars have arrived and will be on sale at the Seed Sale and at the November club meeting. We will have calendars at both locations for pick-up by those members who have already ordered. All pictures submitted by members will be returned at the Seed Sale and November meeting.

A big THANK YOU goes to our selection committee for a job well done. This year's selection committee consisted of Eunice Hudgins, Carol Whiteside and Pat Johnson.

For those of you who might be unfamiliar with the process of producing the yearly calendar, here's a review. Members are asked in August to send photos they think are noteworthy to Sissy Logan and Pam Ogden. They are instructed not to put their name on the back of the photo so that the selections can be completely anonymous. A judging committee is then formed consisting of three club members who did not submit photos. They make twelve selections, one for each month, and also select Honorable Mentions which are reproduced on the back of the calendar. The judges do not know who submitted each photo until the calendars are printed. It is a tough task for them since so many club members are great photographers who contribute to the production of outstanding calendars each year.

The calendars sell for \$12.00 and make wonderful gifts. We hope you enjoy our club's talent!! - Sissy Logan and Pam Ogden



### RVBC PARTICIPATES IN ROANOKE'S GO FEST! OCT. 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> at the RIVERS EDGE SPORTS COMPLEX

This year for the first time, the Bird Club had a booth at the Roanoke GO Outside Festival. The bird club offered 3 birding trips led by Kent Davis aimed at adults called Birding Roanoke's Greenway and 3 "Bird Sleuth Adventure" outings for children aged 7-14 led by Mary Harshfield. We also had lots of birding materials available and activities at our booth. Here is a photo of Mary Lou Barritt helping twins play our bird game which proved to be quite popular, submitted by Pam Ogden.



### WELCOME NEW ROANOKE VALLEY BIRD CLUB MEMBERS:

Roger and Ellen Holtman, Emma and Chris Kotlowski, Bill Farmer, Robert and Matthias Borneff and family. Tricia French, John Getgood, Liz Hudson, Judy Tomczak, Candi Moldenhauer and Barbara Smith

### THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE'S SLATE OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2017

The Nominating Committee of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club, proposes the following list of candidates for election at the November, 2016 meeting

#### OFFICERS:

**President - Kent Davis**

**VP (Membership) - Eleanor Dye**

**VP (Programs) - Toni Pepin**

**Secretary - Linda Barker**

**Treasurer - Sissy Logan**

**DIRECTORS: Nathan Anderson, Robin Austin, Mary Lou Barritt, Mary Ellen Belcher  
Linda Cory, Maxine Fraade, Mary Harshfield and Eunice Hudgins**

We hope you will attend this important meeting and vote. Nominations can also be taken from the floor.

# SIGHTINGS

## CLUB MEMBER SIGHTINGS:

- ✓ Robin Austin of Bent Mountain had a Red-breasted Nuthatch in her yard.
- ✓ Al McPherson was travelling out West and saw an American Dipper.
- ✓ Dick Hendrix of SML was boating and saw a loon who was calling.
- ✓ Kathy Clemo was visiting Dolphin Island in Alabama and saw many birds, including Oyster Catchers, Black Skimmers, and Semipalmated Plovers.
- ✓ Linda Cory saw a Yellow-rumped Warbler at her Allstate office.
- ✓ Elizabeth Knoebber was at home in South County where she saw a Great Blue Heron.
- ✓ Carol Whiteside has 18 Wood Ducks on her pond and Palm Warblers in her yard.
- ✓ Alyce Quinn hosted the Big Sit and had only 19 species due to windy conditions.
- ✓ Ed Kinser reported a Le Conte's sparrow.

## FIELD TRIP SIGHTINGS:

**Beaver Pond** - October 1st was a perfect fall day for birdwatching in Craig County where 35 species were seen. Part of the **group** walked along the stream and swampy area, getting great looks at 2 Lincoln sparrows, common yellow-throats, ravens, pied-billed grebes, a great-blue heron and a kingfisher. Others chose to bird from the Barker's cabin front porch where they were treated to a variety of feeder birds including woodpeckers, purple finches and a be-speckled immature rose-breasted grosbeak. It was a great day for butterflies as well with numerous species including monarchs, great-spangled and meadow fritillaries and a long-tailed skipper which is a rarity for our region.

**Harvey's Knob Hawk Watching Day** - On September 24th, the Roanoke Valley Bird Club hawk watchers greeted several club members and guests including a Boy Scout troop at Harvey's Knob located at milepost 95.6 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Participants got to see how hawks are identified and the importance of the data collected at Harvey's Knob. This season's record is approaching some 5,000 hawks, eagles and falcons. The majority of hawks seen that day were broad-wings. To view hawk migration data taken at Harvey's Knob visit <https://sites.google.com/site/bijame/home>



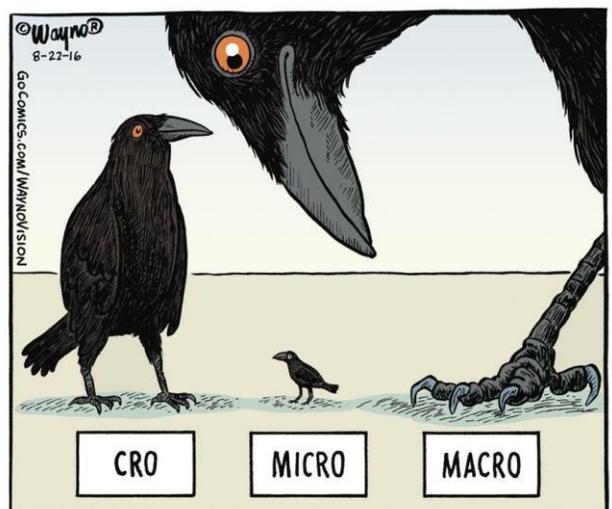
**Big Sit!** - Although we had high expectations for the Big Sit! after having had 2 days and nights of rain, the gusty winds that stayed with us all day on Sunday, October 9 conspiring to keep the numbers down. We had a grand total of 19 species, with a great blue heron flyover being the most interesting. But the nine people in attendance still managed to have fun as we enjoyed a beautiful fall day with good company and yummy food at the potluck lunch.

**Second Wednesday Walk** - In spite of the construction at Greenfield, the birds were plentiful with 47 species observed. Highlights were great looks at a common moorhen AKA common gallinule, a yellow-billed cuckoo, hairy woodpecker, blue-headed vireo, both kinglets, and a variety of warblers.

**TRENDING AROUND THE INTERNET**- Here are some interesting internet links about birds, sent in by our members. To share your favorite web link of birding interest email it to [rvbcnews@cox.net](mailto:rvbcnews@cox.net) Submitted by Mary Harshfield; Jon Young is the author of the book "What the Robin Knows" and he shares some great audio files at this website:

<https://www.hmhbooks.com/whatterobinknows/>

In reference to the program at this month's meeting. Learn more about diseases that outdoor cats can carry and spread to humans at <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/toxoplasmosis> and another cat born disease <http://www.cdc.gov/cat-scratch-fever> Also if you would like to see what cats actually do when outdoors, follow a kitty cam at <http://www.kittycams.uga.edu/>



## BIRD TOPIC - House Finch eye disease / Avian Conjunctivitis compiled by Maureen Eiger

**Mycoplasma conjunctivitis** (also called avian conjunctivitis or House Finch eye disease) is a disease, most commonly observed in House Finches, in which the eye is swollen, crusty and sometimes shut. Birds with avian conjunctivitis often have red, swollen, watery, or crusty eyes; in extreme cases the eyes are so swollen or crusted over that the birds are virtually blind.



Although infected birds have swollen eyes, the disease is primarily a respiratory infection. It is caused by a unique strain of the bacterium, *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, which is a common pathogen in domestic turkeys and chickens. The infection poses no known health threat to humans, and had not been reported in songbirds prior to this outbreak. Researchers at various institutions are currently trying to learn more about the transmission, genetics, and development of this disease. Conjunctivitis was first noticed in House Finches during the winter of 1993-94 in Virginia and Maryland. The disease later spread to states along the East Coast, and has now been reported throughout most of eastern North America, as far north as Quebec, Canada, as far south as Florida, and as far west as California. It has also appeared in some species other than House Finches.

House Finches are not native to eastern North America. Until the 1940s, House Finches were found only in western North America. Some birds were released to the wild in the East after pet stores stopped illegal sales of "Hollywood Finches," as they were commonly known to the pet bird trade. The released birds successfully bred in the wild and spread rapidly throughout eastern North America. Because today's eastern House Finch populations originated entirely from a small number of released birds, they are highly inbred, exhibit low genetic diversity and, may therefore be more susceptible to this disease than other bird species native to the East.

Whenever birds are concentrated in a small area, the risk of a disease spreading can increase immensely. Research suggests that House Finches that spend large amounts of time at feeders spread the disease more effectively. This is a good reason as to why one should set up several feeding stations and not just one.



**Please be responsible and clean your feeders on a regular basis even when there are no signs of disease. Take down your feeders bimonthly and clean them with a 10% bleach solution (1 part bleach and 9 parts water). Let them dry completely and then re-hang them. Also, rake underneath the feeder to remove old seed and bird droppings. Birds depend on us to have a healthy and clean feeding station to enjoy.**

And if you do find a sick bird please try to catch it and place it in a box. Then call a bird rehabber for advice. Some birds may be able to be treated successfully for the infection.



Roanoke Valley Bird Club  
C/o Eleanor Dye  
P.O. Box 74  
Vinton, Virginia 24179

## 2017 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