



April '20 Newsletter

Celebrating 63 Years of Birding
1957-2020

NEXT MEETING

Due to Covid-19, we will not be meeting during April or May. We'll resume meeting in September. Stay well and happy birding.

Hi, birding friends -- I have a couple of ideas that might help as we try to keep ourselves occupied, structured, and sane during these most "interesting" times.

1. eBird (www.eBird.org) is full of hotspots that are under-birded. Why not find an under-birded hotspot near you, and help add data by check listing there? Then go back again and again, and help build a consistent, comprehensive dataset over time. A lot of people are limiting long trips, so as not to expose themselves to additional risks or having to make extra shopping excursions, etc. So it's a great time to find a nearby hotspot that you might not ordinarily consider a great birding location, and help build the dataset for it. On the eBird website, it says that suburban and urban hotspots are typically under-birded. For most of us, helping build these datasets is going to be more useful to researchers than twitching the great wild areas for the sake of our own life lists (as wonderful as that can be).
2. Another idea is to locate a hotspot whose bar chart is incomplete, and try to help fill out the missing weeks with a checklist, as the calendar ticks along.
3. Read up on fieldcraft and birding ethics, or take some song quizzes online. Or have a buddy open the bird guide, and call out warblers to you and have you mimic their songs.
4. Explore the eBird learning pages so you can become a better user, or sign up for eBird if you've not had a chance to try it. A couple of years on eBird have been so helpful in improving my own birding. I could go on at length about that, but not now!

While activities and travel are curtailed, just think of the opportunities afforded to us by the birds themselves, not constrained by airports or closures -- flying thousands of miles in another glorious spring of the year. Enjoy getting outside and letting your mind and spirit travel with the birds while we are so constrained close to home.

Happy spring birding,
Betsy Kane
Washington, N.C. (Carolina Birds)

AUDUBON CARE PACKAGE

At Audubon, the health and well-being of our members, volunteers, and staff is our top priority. This is why we—like many other organizations and individuals—have taken steps in response to COVID-19 to protect those in the Audubon network.

You'll continue to receive updates from us if any Audubon-related events or locations near you are affected by the developing situation.

With so much to consider, and with many of us complying with thorough hygiene and social distancing recommendations, it's easy to become overwhelmed.

But while our personal circumstances may differ, we have one thing in common: an enduring love of birds. And at times like this, birds can bring us joy and provide a connection to the natural world.

We've pulled together some of our favorite videos, photo albums, and articles about the birds we all love, and wanted to share them with you. We hope you enjoy this "care package" of sorts—and that it provides a small moment of joy today and whenever else you might need it. Check it out at www.audubon.org.

Birds

U H R T Y S P I G E O N S U T T L Q U A I L L Q
M A C A R O N I P E N G U I N I S Z Y V C A C H
P S I X Q Q Q G B M S L M Y B O E L G A E C R E
P J F M P V W T U E K A R D D I O H F T J M O M
P D B P A Z W J D M A L L A R D G L F W E V W P
W I L Y X E J T G F A R C T I C T E R N C R C O
D E U Y A U J X I G W R O B I N P A R R O T N R
U S E P V Y K N E H D Y L V F W I J X W R E Z E
W O J E L W O N R A B D I T B I D N K X S T K R
O O A L Y T Z R N L J N H U F L N U N P E Y T P
L G Y I W A Z E H L D V P B B O W C A J E Y O E
L U H C Z T V L S E R E E D L I K R H R M T O N
A V T A T A X A U V V C I H G V R H G U D N J G
W G B N R I S N B P T X K A M O S N B W F A A U
S R K K X H Q I A Z O D B S W I A E L F R R R I
M E H M D N B D L L U G A E S C C R U I D O R N
O A E X A A M R P N Q Z T P I X U K E Y U M U P
P T L O G G M A G Z O U A R D W U Q H E C R B D
L E K L U K P C S U T C F W J N V X E P K O A N
Z G C Y T A H I D M W A L T P D I V R D J C K O
X R A K J A F N E P L R O A C S V S O W R P O Z
A E R D W S N O W Y O W L G F H A G N B P C O P
O T G K H Q B K D R I B G N I M M U H D A F K P
W T N I D P S Y V Y U E V L P T T K Z S M D L Z

African grey Arctic Tern Barn Owl Blueheron Bluejay Budgie Cardinal Cormorant
Crow Drake Duck Eagle Emporer Penguin Falcon Finch Goose Grackle Great Egret
Hawk Hummingbird Ibis Kildeere Kookaburra Loon Macaroni Penguin Magpie Mallard
Parrot Pelican Pigeon Quail Raven Robin Seagull Snowy Owl Sparrow Swallow
Tern

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

March 11th: Two groups went birding at Greenfield (3 folks started at 8 a.m. and another 10 started at 9 a.m.) and observed a total of 39 species. Highlights included Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Greater Scaup, Pied-billed Grebe, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Common Raven, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Field Sparrow, Eastern Phoebe, White-throated Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Eastern Meadowlark, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, American Goldfinch, and Killdeer.

The other scheduled March field trips were cancelled. Due to recommendations from federal and state authorities regarding Covid 19, it makes sense to cancel April field trips as well. We can reassess the situation for May.

CONNECT WITH KIDS

For those who live in neighborhoods, you can also challenge your neighborhood kids to learn more about birds. I just sent this challenge out to my neighborhood: I challenge those children ages 10 and under to find 5 different kinds of birds in our neighborhood, draw pictures of all 5 birds, and then share their favorite drawing to this group. Be sure to attach the child's name to the drawing. (*Send me some pictures and stories and I'll include them in next newsletter.*)

Things to discuss with the child about the bird:

1. Type of bird (cardinal, sapsucker, white headed nuthatch, bluebird, etc.)
2. What the bird likes to eat (insects, seeds, etc.)
3. Where the bird lives (trees, ground, etc.)

Resources:

- <https://www.coolkidfacts.com/bird-facts/>
- <https://www.ducksters.com/animals/birds.php>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF0ld-hH9y4>
- <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/> (adults)



Bird Skull by Nathan Anderson

BIRDING IN THE TIME OF CORONA...

Dr. Ashley Peele, VABBA2 State Coordinator

Folks, we are living through some very strange times marked by sudden isolation from one another and from many of our usual haunts. The confinement can be frustrating, but fortunately, birding offers a welcome respite for those suffering from cabin fever. Even better, spring migration is underway and many of our resident species are starting to set up territories, build nests, and even lay their first clutches of eggs! Much is happening for birders to get out and observe.

If you're looking for an excuse to get out birding, then look no further than the VA Breeding Bird Atlas project. This effort is entering its fifth and FINAL year, still needing help to survey priority blocks within reach of Roanoke. The most recent [VABBA2 Target Map](#) (next page) gives you an idea of where the current priorities are, while the [Atlas Block Explorer tool](#) provides an even clearer picture of where we most need local birders to collect breeding bird data.

If you need a refresher on contributing data to the VABBA2 project, here are a few key steps...

Decide what priority area you will be targeting

The [Atlas Block Explorer](#) will help you identify a target area and also allows you to download a map of that area to ensure you stay within the boundaries of the survey block

Record breeding evidence, i.e. breeding codes, when out birding.

The VABBA2 website has many useful articles about how and when to use breeding codes (vabba2.org)

Report your breeding bird observations to the VABBA2 eBird portal

You can do this via the eBird app on your smartphone or through your computer, by logging into the VABBA2 portal at ebird.org/atlasva

Note! If you don't report your breeding data to our portal, then we won't receive so please don't throw it into regular ebird.org but take them time to put it in the right place.

Birding is a fun, safe activity that you can do, while still practicing good social distancing behaviors. While some may prefer to bird in a small group, solo birding is still a rewarding activity. Plus, everyone can use a break from being at home and indoors all day. Use the VABBA2 project as an excuse to get outside, de-stress, and while you're at it, contribute valuable data to this historic project. This is the last year of the project, which means it is also your last chance to add valuable data for your region. Southwest Virginia still has the greatest number of areas in need of breeding bird data, so get out there and help us make our final year count!

For more resources on Atlas data entry, breeding codes, etc., check out the Atlas Resources page at <http://amjv.org/vabba/news-and-resources/>, where you'll find many useful Atlas articles and tutorials, including two of our most recent stories...

<https://ebird.org/atlasva/news/volunteer-guidance-for-final-2020-field-season>

<https://ebird.org/atlasva/news/the-high-points-of-southwest-virginia>

VABBA2 Priority Block Target Effort 2020

Legend

Target Effort 2020 v3

0

higher priority

moderate priority

lower priority

completed/assigned

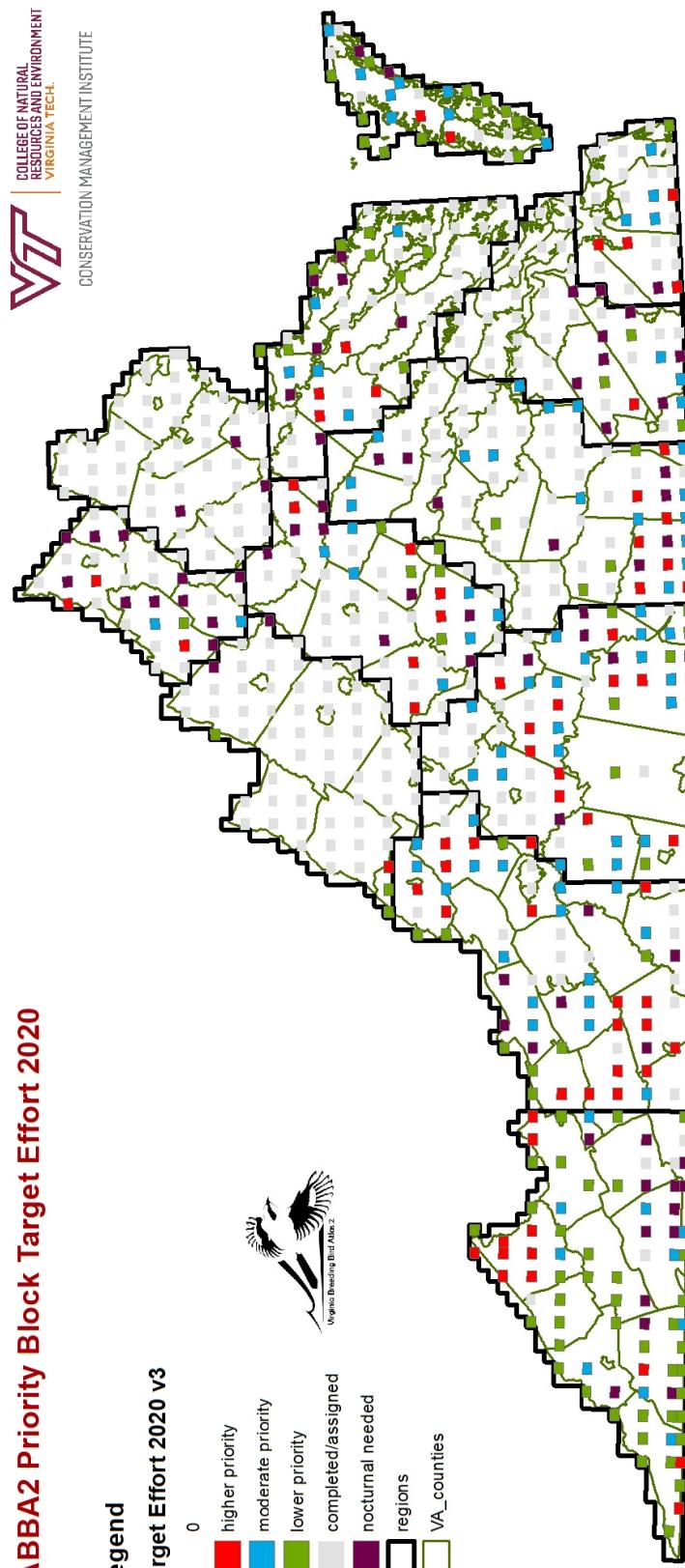
nocturnal needed

regions

VA_counties



COLLEGE OF NATURAL
RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT
VIRGINIA TECH
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE



Created by: Michael St. Germain
Currency: 09 March 2020

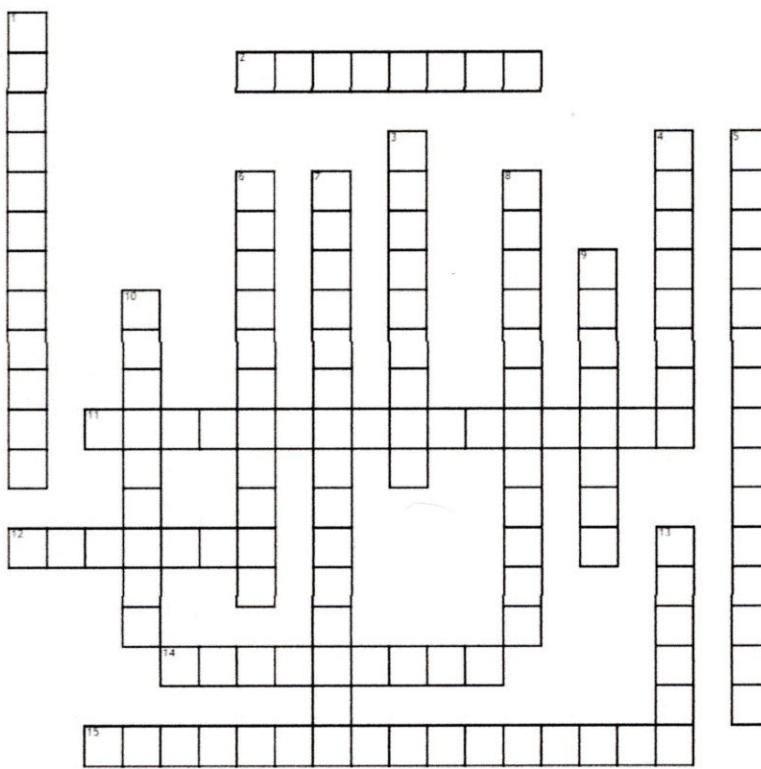
120 Miles

0 15 30 60 90

Miles

N E
W S

Birds



Across

2. The ghostlike owl has unmistakable white plumage that echoes its Arctic origins.
11. hunt from above and, after sighting their prey, drop into a steep, swift dive that can top 200 miles an hour (320 kilometers an hour).
12. These birds have been popular companions throughout history because they are intelligent, charismatic, colorful, and musical
14. These famous pink birds can be found in warm, watery regions on many continents.
15. They are small to medium sized birds, but they have relatively long legs that they put to good use.

Down

1. is thought to be the most abundant and wide-ranging duck on Earth.
3. They roam African savanna and desert lands and get most of their water from the plants they eat
4. natural forest dwellers, but they are also highly adaptable and intelligent birds.
5. These flightless animals live on the Antarctic ice and in the frigid surrounding waters
6. one of the best known birds in North America. It is found in every contiguous U.S. state and Canadian province at one time of the year or another
7. These birds live most of their lives at sea, resting on the waves when not swimming.
8. These large birds glide on air currents, conserving energy while searching the forests or savanna below for the corpses of dead animals.
9. are large, colorful (typically blue and green) known for their iridescent tails.
10. considered fairly common, but their numbers have declined substantially during the last century.
13. These sleek, black birds are excellent and acrobatic fliers on par with falcons and hawks. Such aerial skills are on display during breeding season, when exciting mating rituals include an elaborate dance of chases, dives, and rolls.



Roanoke Valley Bird Club
c/o Diane Malpass
3703 Forest Rd. SW
Roanoke, VA 24015



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 _____

Make check payable to the
Roanoke Valley Bird Club
c/o Diane Malpass
3703 Forest Rd. SW
Roanoke, VA 24015