



December '17 Newsletter

Celebrating 60 Years of Birding
1957-2017

NEXT MEETING

Monday, December 11th 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.)

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 a 1-5 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!



UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

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

December 1-3, VSO Annual Birding Trip to Virginia Beach

With the closing of all of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel islands, this trip gives us an excellent opportunity to bird this area with the Virginia Society of Ornithology (we are invited as a chapter of the VSO). This is a free weekend event for VSO members or \$20 for non. Lodging and food are on our own and there is a small charge if you elect to take the tram and/or boat ride. For more information, visit www.virginiabirds.org or email Lee Adams at leeloudenslageradams@gmail.com.

December 9, 8AM, Virginia Beach, Smith Mountain Lake State Park

Meet Bob Epperson (871-3471) at the Bedford Welcome Center (816 Burks Hill Rd, Bedford) at the intersection of Route 460 and 122. From there we will car pool south to the state park stopping at some local ponds along SR122 before we reach the state park. Target birds are Common Loon, Horned Grebe and other waterfowl as well as the Brown-headed Nuthatch which is a year-round resident at the state park. Bring water and a snack for this half day trip. Wear sturdy shoes for walking about one mile of trails. A spotting scope would be useful for viewing waterfowl on the lake. There are multiple restrooms and covered picnic areas available. Directions to the Bedford Welcome Center: From Roanoke at the intersection of Orange Avenue and Williamson Road, go 25.5 miles east on 460 and take a left on Burks Hill Rd (AKA122). There may be a fee to park your car at the state park, so bring a few dollars just in case.

December 13, Wednesday, 9AM, Second Wednesday Bird Walk at Greenfield

Join leader Barry Whitt (309-4353) 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 about 1 1/2 miles. 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! For those that want to eat after the walk, Ballast Point Brewery is now open at 11AM for lunch. Please note that this walk is at 9AM. This walk will be repeated on Wednesday, January 10th, weather permitting. 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.

Second annual MBC Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands Birding Boat Trip is set for January 13, 2018.

The boat will leave the dock at 3311 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach, VA at 9:00 a.m. and return at 1:00 p.m. - weather permitting. I will be watching the wind and weather closely and give updates on a timely basis. I will need everyone's email and cell phone numbers so I can reach you with last minute updates. What to bring: Food, drinks and warm clothes. Layering is the best way to go. Cost: \$35.00 per person. A tip for the mate is included in your \$35.00 fee. Please make all checks payable to Monticello Bird Club. P.O. Box 4362 Charlottesville, VA 22905. To reserve your spot on the boat, please make your reservation now. I will need to have your money by Monday January 8, 2018. I will be able to give refunds for last-minute cancellations up until Thursday January 11, 2018. Space is limited so please make your reservation early. To register, please contact me at: doug5996@gmail.com or the Club email at: birders@monticellobirdclub.org. Or call me at: 434.409.8156. We had a great time on the trip this past January! Please join us!

Sightings & Field Trip Reports

Second Wednesday at Greenfield (11/8) - In spite of a cold and rainy morning, 6 bird club members were treated to 43 species of birds. Highlights were Tundra swans, Double-crested Cormorants, a Bald Eagle, Pied-billed Grebes, Gadwall, Shovelers, Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks and Greater Yellowlegs. Other highlights were Bonaparte's Gull, Rusty Blackbirds and a Belted Kingfisher.

Claytor Lake Walk (11/26) - The Roanoke club met with the New River Valley club (20 total) on a blustery day with a hint of snow. Highlights were Bald Eagle, Snow Goose, Bonapartes Gull, Pied-billed and Eared Grebes ... And of course a Belted Kingfisher.



CLUB NEWS

2018 RVBC Calendars

The beautiful 2018 RVBC calendars are here and ready for your purchasing, both as gifts and personal use. The cost of each remains the same as last year at \$12. Each features gorgeous photos taken by our members which you don't want to miss seeing. The calendars will be available for purchase at the club meeting December. Many thanks to Eunice Hudgins, Robin Austin, and Pat Johnson (our selection committee) who took time out from their day to review all thirty-eight images in order to select twenty-four. And many thanks to those nine members who submitted their best work for this competition. We have some great photographers among us! - Pam Ogden & Lourdes Page

Annual Holiday/Christmas Card Bird Count

As bird watchers, we all receive cards from family and friends with birds on them. You might even send out cards with our feathered friends on them, too. In the spirit of competition, count all of the birds that are on the cards that you receive during the 2017 holiday season. Bring your total number of birds counted on your received cards to the January 13th meeting. There will be a first and second place prize! You don't have to list species (how can we when card makers use artistic license), but just a total number. If you are unable to attend the January meeting, send your number total with a friend or email RVBC2015@outlook.com.

2017 Annual Seed Sale Report

Despite it being a chilly, rainy day, the club's annual Seed Sale went well this year. Our on-site sales are always down a bit when it rains, but we still managed to make almost \$800 profit, selling over 8000 pounds of seed. In addition to providing quality seed, the sale is a great way to get our faces out in the public so people know we exist. So whether you ordered seed, provided goodies, worked the day of the sale, or helped out beforehand, we thank you. And if you shop at Hollins Northwest Hardware, please let them know how much we appreciate them hosting us every year; it's a lot of work for them as well as for us. A huge thank you to everyone who helped out before or during the sale, and if I missed anyone, I sincerely apologize: Robin and Allen Austin, Sid and Mary Lou Barritt, Mary Ellen Belcher, Barbara Bricks, Betty Burke, Linda Cory, Bob Crawford, Kent Davis, Philip Dean, Annie Downing, Jonathan Eagle, Norris Ford, Dick Hendrix, Eunice Hudgins. Elizabeth Knoebber, Sissy Logan, Rita and Jerry O'Brien, Tim and Alyce Quinn, Judy Repass, Bob and Ellen Rummel, Kathy Sink, Sandy Stinnett, Pam Wefel and Liz Williams.

--Alyce Quinn, Chairman

Christmas Bird Count

A census of birds in the Western Hemisphere performed in a "count circle" with a diameter of 15 miles, have been conducted every December since 1900. Observers count every bird seen in assigned areas. All counts are forwarded to the National Audubon Society for use in conservation biology. The Roanoke Valley Bird Club does three counts:

Roanoke – Saturday, December 16

Contact Bill Hunley (wjhunley@gmail.com) or 774-2397

Fincastle – Sunday, December 17

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

Peaks of Otter – Tuesday, December 19

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

You may, and we encourage you to, participate in all three counts. Contact the above leaders to be assigned a territory. New birders or first-time counters will be placed with experienced birders. We drive most of our territories stopping often and getting out of the car to look, listen and count the birds. It's a fun day to join fellow birders and maybe discover a new birding territory. Most areas are covered in about four hours. There will be sign-up sheets at the November meeting. Please join us – we need your help. Following the Fincastle count, we will meet at Woodpecker Ridge at noon for a bowl of Barry Kinzie's soup and a tally of all the birds.



BIRD OF THE MONTH - Wild Turkey

One of our celebrated seasonal birds is the turkey (unfortunately for them). Although turkey hunting season varies in Virginia, the turkey that most families cook for Thanksgiving and Christmas is the “domestic turkey”. So, what is the difference between the Wild Turkey and the domestic Tom turkey that we find in grocery stores? They are indeed both the same genus and species - *Meleagris gallopavo*, but they vary greatly. History books show that as early as 25 AD, Native Americans in Mexico and Central America bred them from a subspecies of the North American Wild Turkey. Spanish explorers took some of those white domesticated turkeys back to Europe around 1519 where they spread rapidly. One hundred years later the English colonists brought them to Virginia and Massachusetts and were surprised to see the much darker native wild turkeys.



After years of turkey farming, the two varieties are greatly different. The domesticated turkey is heavier, has shorter legs, is more docile, rarely flies and usually has white feathers. The Wild Turkey is slimmer with longer legs that help them run 25 MPH and stronger wings allowing them to fly a mile at a time up to 60 MPH. And of course, they are magnificently more beautiful. One of my favorite Wild Turkey memories is when I was with girlfriends sitting outside, eating, drinking and talking away. Being the only birder in the group, I was keeping an eye on a rafter of turkeys inching closer and closer. As we were cackling away, the turkeys were doing the same. When I brought everyone’s attention to them, we stopped talking and they stopped gobbling, but soon we resumed and the turkeys did too coming within a yard of us. Birds of a feather!

Linda Cory

From Bird Watcher’s Digest, here are some trivia questions: Answers on pg. 3.

1 - Where are you least likely to find a Wild Turkey?

- A. Alaska
- B. Hawaii
- C. Florida
- D. New Mexico

2 - What is the typical wingspan of a Wild Turkey?

- A. 2 feet
- B. 4 feet
- C. 6 feet
- D. 8 feet

3 - What backyard foods can you put out to attract Wild Turkeys?

- A. Thistle seed and millet
- B. Peanuts and suet
- C. Sunflower seed and cracked corn
- D. None of the above

4 - There is only one other species in the genus *Meleagris*?

- A. Ruffed Grouse
- B. Ring-necked Pheasant
- C. Chachalaca
- D. Ocellated Turkey

5 - What are young turkeys called?

- A. Poults
- B. Jakes
- C. Jennies
- D. All of the above



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	