



March 2010 Newsletter

*Celebrating 53 Years
of Birding! 1957-2010*

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Visit our website:
roanokevalleybirdclub.com

FEBRUARY MEETING

We watched the first half of an outstanding documentary on wading birds by Judy Fieth and Michael Male titled *Watching Waders*.



Blue Heron © Birdfreak.com

NEXT MEETING:

March 8, 7:00 p.m.

Grandin Court Baptist Church

Do you wonder how to identify that “naked” bird in a nest? Or maybe a bird with just a few pin feathers? Maureen Eiger, a licensed wild bird rehabilitator and club member will show us how to identify baby birds. Learn a new set of fledgling field marks, and see species like you’ve never seen them before. Test your skills with a *What baby bird is that?* quiz.



Please consider bringing a box of tissues (non-scented) or a roll of paper towels to donate to the Wildlife Care Alliance to help rehab baby birds.....*Thank You!*

Please join us for dinner at 5:30 p.m. before the meeting at the Brambleton Deli at 3655 Brambleton Road.

Membership Drive, March 1 – May 31

Do you have a friend who would like to join the club? From now until May 31, 2010, all current members may renew their 2011 membership for half-price if they bring in a full-paying new 2010 membership.

Roanoke Outside.com

Want to find out what outdoor events are happening in the Roanoke area? Visit <http://www.roanokeoutside.com/> a new site with lots of information on outdoor events, clubs, and other activities.

FIELD TRIPS

CHAIRMAN

BOB MILLER 797-0462

REMEMBER TO SHARE THE COST OF GAS WHEN YOU CARPOOL

Green Hill Park, March 13, 8 a.m.

Meet at Green Hill Park parking lot. About 1 mile level walking. Bill Hunley, leader.

Fairystone State Park, March 20, 8:30 a.m.

Meet at Tanglewood Mall under the sign near Electric Rd. at 8:00 or in the Wal-mart parking lot near the road in Rocky Mount at 8:30. The groups will meet at the park. Alyce Quinn, leader.

FIELD NOTES

Winter Raptor Count, February 13, 2010 (See page 5-6 for results)

Rockbridge County – Locher Tract, February 27, 2010

The newsletter went to press before 2/27. Results of this trip will be in the April newsletter.

VSO 2010 Annual Meeting April 23 – 25, 2010

The 2010 annual meeting will be held in Farmville April 23 – 25. Field trips are planned to new High Bridge Trail State Park, Sandy

River Reservoir, and other birding hotspots in “southside” Virginia. The banquet will feature a presentation by Ted Floyd, editor of *Birding* magazine and author of the *Smithsonian Field Guide to Birds of North America*. Due to the relatively early date of the meeting full details and registration information were in the winter issue of the VSO newsletter. Visit: <http://www.virginiabirds.net>



© Birdfreak.com

Sightings

Jan. 24: John Pancake and Barry Kinzie sighted an adult merlin, most likely a male, near the bridge at Greenfield Lake.

Feb. 13: Alyce and Tim Quinn, and Carol Siler saw 8

common mergansers on Lake Moomaw.

Feb. 14: Ed Burroughs and Barry Kinzie spotted at the Martin Farm buildings in Fincastle: 7 tree sparrows, 7 white-crowned sparrows, 1 savannah sparrow, and some eastern meadowlarks, 1 American kestrel, 1 red-tailed hawk, and yellow-rumped warblers. Barry also reported that brown-headed nuthatches have been sighted around Roanoke.

Feb. 17: Butch and Betty Kelly reported a hermit thrush near their home and also sighted cedar waxwings in their yard in Catawba.

Sightings reported at Feb. RVBC Meeting:

John and Eunice Hudgins saw 6 redheads (4 males/2 females) at Stevens Pond on Jan. 29th. On Feb. 7 they saw 5 trumpeter swans at Gala Wetlands.



Red-headed Woodpecker
at Smith Mountain Lake
© Dick Hendrix

Dick Hendrix sighted a red-headed woodpecker visiting his feeder at his home on Smith Mountain Lake (Bedford side). See Dick's photo.

River otter spotted on
Jackson River in early
January. © Cory Goff



Coming Soon: Gala Wetlands Access for RVBC Members

Barry Kinzie has kindly arranged with VDOT for RVBC members to bird the Gala Wetlands. *The Gala Wetlands are a restricted area and bird club members must follow specific guidelines when entering the property. (Please see the information letter on page 7.)*

Until Barry can work out further arrangements, only **Roanoke Valley Bird Club Members** with a **signed authorization letter from Barry Kinzie** are allowed on the property. You **must** have this authorization letter with you at all times while on the property to show VDOT if you are questioned.

In addition, RVBC members must observe/document the birds and wildlife that are found on the site. RVBC members must provide a list of the species seen to: Kevin.Bradley@VDOT.virginia.gov

Eunice Hudgins will have signed authorization letters from Barry to distribute at the March meeting for those members that would like them. (If you want a letter you may want to contact Eunice before the meeting (uvaau@aol.com) to ensure that Eunice has enough copies.) Barry will mail authorization letters to those who are not at the meeting.

As soon as the weather clears and the ground dries, we will be able to drive in through two gates (they are closed, but not locked) to a gravel parking area. Upon leaving the area, you must close the gate.

Please DO NOT park on the shoulders of Rt. 220.

Many thanks to Barry Kinzie for making this arrangement for the bird club.

What to Do When You Find a Wild Bird in Trouble

As the nesting season approaches, you may find the need to assist birds in trouble. Here are some tips:

Carry a Nesting Box in the Trunk of Your Car

Punch air holes into the sides of a small box and place a towel (to make a towel nest) inside. Do not line the box with leaves or grasses as they may harbor mites or bugs.

If You Find a Baby Bird

If the young bird is hopping and running away from you, leave it alone. The parents will find her. Watch from a hidden location, distant from the bird. The parents will not go to the bird if they see/sense you! It can take up to one or two hours before the parents return. Contact a local wild bird rehabilitator for more information only if you do not see the parents return. Remember to stay out of sight.

If the bird is in immediate danger of outdoor pets, scoop her up and put in a nearby bush out of harm's way.

If you find a baby with little or no feathers and you know where the nest is, then return the bird to its nest.

If the baby/fledgling is very cold to the touch, take it inside to warm before placing back in the nest. Nestle the bird in a warm towel or use a hot water bottle with a towel between the bird and the bottle. Be careful not to overheat the bird. Place the bird in a warm, dark, quiet place away from children and pets then return it to its nest. Contact a local rehabilitator for more information.

Do not attempt to feed baby birds or fledglings! Do not give the bird water. If you cannot find the nest or the bird appears to be sick, injured or your pet brought the bird home still alive, contact a local rehabilitator.

All Cat-Caught Birds

Cat-caught birds need rehab care immediately even if you do not detect anything wrong with the bird. Cat saliva

is deadly to birds. Puncture wounds in birds heal almost instantly! Puncture wounds are not easily found. Birds



do not bleed like humans or other animals do. Do not return cat caught birds to the wild. Call a rehabilitator immediately as they may need to have treatment ASAP! Best survival rate is within 24-48 hours of the attack.

Bird Nest Destroyed

If the nest has been destroyed, you can construct a makeshift nest using a small basket or plastic container. Punch small holes in the bottom for drainage. Line the container with material from the old nest or similar dried grasses or material. Wire your "nest" to a branch or place it securely in a branch fork close to, or in the same spot, as the old nest. (If you are not sure where the bird was nesting, contact a local rehabilitator.)

Place bird(s) into the new nest and leave the area. The parents will find her. Watch from a hidden location, distant from the bird. The parents will not go to the bird if they see/sense you! It can take up to one or two hours before the parents return. Contact a local rehabilitator for more information only if you do not see the parents return. Remember to stay out of sight. Do not attempt to feed or give water to baby birds or fledglings.

Found a Bird's Egg

If wind knocked egg out of nest, and you can locate the nest, gently place egg back into the nest. If nest cannot be found, place egg under a bush close to where you found it.

Found Bird Tangled

If the bird is caught in twine or string have someone assist you. Hold the bird in a clean towel and use baby scissors to gently cut knots out of the string/twine. If there are no signs of other injuries, return bird back to bush/shrub or safe location near where you found it. If you notice any signs of injury, contact a local rehabilitator.

Found Bird Lying on Its Side, Window-Hit, Stunned, Wing/Leg or Other Injury

If any bird allows you to catch it and does not attempt to fly away, place the bird in a towel-lined small box and keep the bird in a quiet, safe place. Contact your local rehabilitator for further instructions.

Bird Caught in Mouse Trap

If bird is caught in a traditional mousetrap, and is still alive, contact your local rehabilitator.

Bird Coated in Oil/Glue or Anything Sticky

Immediately contact your local rehabilitator. If the bird is caught in a sticky mouse trap or fly paper, or if the bird

is coated in oil or sticky material cover the bird's head to prevent inhalation of powder. Then dust small amounts of flour or cornstarch on sticky spots to prevent bird from re-sticking to itself or to anything else. Uncover bird's head. Place bird in box and transport to a local rehabilitator.

Bird Found Inside Your House/Garage

If a bird is found inside your house or garage, lock all pets away. Darken room by closing blinds, shades, close all other doors/windows but leave only one exit (large bright sunny) opening for the bird to fly out. Any open door or window will do. If it is close to night, place a light near the opening to help guide the bird.

All Other General Bird Needs

If a bird is fluffed and lethargic, or if a bird flies a short distance and then falls to the ground, or if a feathered bird allows you to pick it up, place the bird in a small box with a towel "nest." Keep the bird in a quiet place. Call, and take the bird to your local rehabilitator.

If the bird is a raptor (an eagle, falcon, hawk, or owl) call a rehabilitator for more information on how to capture the bird. **Be careful, as you can get seriously injured from improper handling or capture.** If the bird is in immediate danger and must be removed use a jacket or blanket to cover the bird (especially its eyes) then place it in a box lined with a towel then call your wild bird rehabilitator.

Call the Wildlife Center of Virginia (540-942-9453) or the Wildlife Care Alliance (540-587-4007) You can also call Maureen Eiger, a RVBC member who is a licensed wild bird rehabilitator (540-342-4890).

Trying to Decide Which Bird Seed to Buy?

More than 50 million people feed wild birds in the U.S. and surprisingly little science has gone into understanding the nutritional needs of wild birds. Project Wildbird, a 2005–2008 study led by David Horn, associate professor of ecology at Millikin University gathers observations from volunteers to study the question. A few conclusions so far:

Birds require foods with high protein and fat. A bird can require up to 10,000 calories a day (equivalent to a human consuming 155,000 calories). especially during flight, the breeding season and on cold days.

Birds must make efficient choices about food. Backyard feeders are an efficient place to forage because it mimics a "resource patch," a food cluster much like an abundant wildflower seed patch.

Birds will not become over-dependent on feeders. Evolutionary pressures encourage birds to sample a variety of foods because any bird that becomes dependent on a single food source will die if it runs out.

Birds must have high-quality food. Birds assess foods for nutritional content and quality. If you watch your birds at your feeders, you may observe them tasting seeds in their bills before discarding or eating them. This explains why birds may avoid your feeders if you put out old, moldy seeds.

Birds choose seeds that are easily handled and digested. Birds must consume nutritional food quickly to avoid predators. Research shows that given a choice between high-quality, cumbersome seeds or low-quality, easily handled seeds, birds consistently choose the latter.

The study found that the most highly sought after seeds are: *black oil sunflower, white proso millet, nyjer (thistle) seed and sunflower chips.*

Evidence shows that backyard feeding improves growth rates, survival rates, breeding success and clutch sizes.

Summarized from "For the Birds: Which Seeds Are Best?"
http://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/National-Wildlife/Birds/Archives/2010/Bird-seeds.aspx?20100211_WLO_February_Edition

Bird Count Yields Seventy-five Species

Because of heavy snow, the forty-fourth Augusta County Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was postponed until December 27, 2009. Eleven gung-ho members of Augusta Bird Club identified 75 species of birds within the count circle – a little better than the average of 72 from previous years. In forty-four years we have noticed trends in population of certain species. For instance, the last time a northern bobwhite appeared on the CBC was in 1994. Compare this with the 113 that were counted in 1976.

The loggerhead shrike has not been reported on the CBC since 1995. For these two species there is an obvious decline.



Sixteen species have appeared on every one of the forty-four counts: turkey vulture, red-bellied woodpecker, downy woodpecker, blue jay, American crow, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, white-breasted nuthatch, northern mockingbird, European starling, field sparrow, song sparrow, dark-eyed junco, northern cardinal, American goldfinch, and house sparrow.

A number of rare birds were counted only one year. These include: red-throated loon, red-breasted merganser, osprey, northern goshawk, greater yellowlegs, pectoral sandpiper, dunlin, American woodcock, snowy owl, rufous

hummingbird, bewick's wren, palm warbler, Brewer's blackbird, mute swan, Lapland longspur, common yellowthroat, and rose-breasted grosbeak.

One interesting bird that formerly occurred in our area almost every year is the evening grosbeak. It has appeared on eighteen counts, but has not been seen since 1995.

The most uncommon species found on the 2009 count was a peregrine falcon, which has been counted only once before. They also counted thirteen species of waterfowl, including 716 Canada geese, eight species of hawks, including one bald eagle and the peregrine falcon. They identified six species of woodpeckers, one red-breasted nuthatch, 171 eastern bluebirds, 147 American robins, and 81 yellow-rumped warblers.

Years ago, it was the tradition for hunters to go out on Christmas day to see how many birds they could shoot. But that changed in 1900, when a member of the Audubon Society, Frank Chapman suggested that it would be a much better idea to simply count birds. That year there were 25 total counts with a cumulative total of 90 species. Since 1900 Christmas Bird Counts have been held every year. We are proud of our record of forty-four consecutive years. Our thanks to Allen Larner, the compiler of the count and the eleven birders who braved the cold and snow to make this year a success.

*Yulee Larner
reprinted from Staunton News Leader*

Two Corporations Convicted Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Jan. 10, 2010 - Golden Eagles are among the most frequently killed birds on power lines due to their size and the vantage that utility poles offer them for hunting.

ExxonMobil was convicted of failing to protect 85 birds from entering and dying in open oil tanks and pits at oil production fields in five states between 2004 and 2009.

The company will have to pay \$600,000 in fines and spend \$2.5 million modifying the facilities to prevent injury to birds.



PacificCorp pleaded guilty to electrocuting 232 Golden Eagles and other migratory birds on its power lines in Wyoming between 2007 and 2009. The company has agreed to pay \$1,410,000 in fines and restitution, and spend an additional

\$9.1 million to repair or replace equipment to protect migratory birds from future electrocution.

Funds from the fine will be distributed to conservation organizations, including HawkWatch International, Wildlife Heritage Foundation of Wyoming, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Murie Audubon Society of Casper, Wyoming, and the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society for raptor conservation.

The American Bird Conservancy hopes that these cases will bring about a change in the behavior of utility and oil companies operating in the West.

Summarized from: US Taking Action to Enforce the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

2010 Raptor Count Results



Rough-legged Hawk © Tim Quinn

While the weather was not the best—snowy and cold—six hardy teams went out and about on Saturday, February 13 to count raptors.

The snow-covered ground may have forced the birds to hang out where it was

warmer and easier to find food. Bill and Anne Tucker have been doing these Raptor Counts since 1992 and this was one of their least productive years.

This year's winners are Carol Siler, Tim and Alyce Quinn! They scoured the Monterey area and Lake Moomaw, but found no eagles, but they did find rough-legged hawks and a barred owl.

This year, the New River Valley Master Naturalist group participated in the count. We hope they'll participate next year.

Bill and Anne Tucker picked up the bonus points for Turkey Vultures. Andy Biggs, Joyce Holt, Linda Barker and Liz Williams received the bonus points for black vultures.

(Results on page 6.)

2010 RAPTOR COUNT TALLY								
							TOTAL	
SPECIES	TEAM A	TEAM B	TEAM C	TEAM D	TEAM E	TEAM F	SPECIES	
TURKEY VULTURE	22			39	43	85	189	
BLACK VULTURE	5		1	13	81	76	176	
RED-TAILED HAWK	10	1	15	1	21	5	53	
AMERICAN KESTREL		1	1	5	3		10	
SCREECH OWL							0	
RAVEN		4	24		4	1	33	
COOPER'S HAWK						1	1	
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK					1		1	
LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE							0	
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK							0	
GREAT HORNED OWL				1			1	
BARRED OWL			1				1	
BARN OWL							0	
NORTHERN HARRIER				1	1		2	
SHORT-EARED OWL							0	
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK			2				2	
GOLDEN EAGLE							0	
BALD EAGLE							0	
PEREGRINE FALCON							0	
MERLIN							0	
GOSHAWK							0	
LONG-EARED OWL							0	
SAW-WHET OWL							0	
NORTHERN SHRIKE							0	
UNIDENTIFIED RAPTOR	2		2	1		2	7	
TOTAL BIRDS	39	6	46	61	154	170	476	
TOTAL POINTS	92	55	522	195	338	175	1377	
					* for BV	* for TV		
* RECEIVED 10 BONUS POINTS FOR PEAK COUNTS								

The Teams:

TEAM A: Laurie & Scott Spangler - Blue Ridge to Lexington via Route 11

TEAM B: Brian Kreowski, Brooks Lindamood & Bob Perkins - Carroll & Grayson Counties

TEAM C: Carol Siler, Tim & Alyce Quinn - Monterey area and Lake Moomaw

TEAM D: John & Eunice Hudgins - Botetourt County

TEAM E: Andy Biggs, Joyce Holt, Liz Williams, Linda Barker -- Roanoke and Botetourt Counties

TEAM F: Bill & Anne Tucker - Franklin, Bedford, Pittsylvania Counties around SML

Mr. Barry Kinzie
P.O. Box 446
Troutville, VA 24175

Dear Mr. Kinzie,

As we discussed on the phone February 11, 2010, VDOT agrees to allow members of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club to access the Eagle Rock Stream/Wetland Mitigation Bank adjacent to Route 220 in Botetourt Co. to observe/document the different types of birds and wildlife utilizing the site. Following each trip to the site you have agreed to provide a list of the species seen on the property during the field review to Kevin Bradley (Salem District Assistant Environmental Manager). This information will be sent to Kevin.Bradley@VDOT.Virginia.gov.

There are entrances to the site along Route 220 that you should use for access. Each entrance has a cable across it; however, the cables are not locked. You can simply unhook the cable and use the parking areas that were used during construction. Please hook the cables back upon leaving the site. Also, see that any members of the club visiting the site are aware of the access points and that it is clear that there is no reason for them to park along Route 220 which could result in a safety hazard for themselves or motorists on Route 220. If necessary, I am available to meet you at the site and identify the entrance points that should be used during your visits.

Please note that included on the next page is a line for your signature. During our phone conversation you stated that you have the authority to sign for the Roanoke Valley Bird Club. By signing this letter you and any members of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club entering the Eagle Rock Stream/Wetland Mitigation Bank property agree to assume full responsibility for your safety while on the property and further agree to hold VDOT harmless for any accident or injury that may occur while on VDOT property. This agreement is specifically for members of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club. No one else may accompany them onto the property without signing a similar agreement and being provided written permission by VDOT to enter the property.

Barry Kinzie for the
Roanoke Valley Bird Club

Please sign and return the letter to the address provided below. As soon as I receive the signed copy of the letter I will email you at the address you provided (Peckerridge@ntelos.net) notifying you that members of the club may enter the property. No one may enter the property until you receive this written authorization. Anyone entering the property should have a copy of this letter with them.

Please call me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (540) 387-5238.

Sincerely,



Kevin Bradley
Salem District Assistant Environmental Manager
731 Harrison Avenue
Salem, Va. 24153



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
731 Harrison Ave., PO Box 3071
SALEM, VIRGINIA 24153-0500

