



# May 2010 Newsletter

*Celebrating 53 Years  
of Birding! 1957-2010*

## INSIDE:

RVBC 2011 Calendar.....	2
Guide to Songbird Set-Up Photography.....	2
Field Trips.....	2
Field Notes.....	2
Sightings.....	3
Help that Wildlife- Friendly Garden Grow..	3
Great Backyard Bird Count 2010.....	3
Harlequin Ducks Still Affected by Exxon Valdez Tanker Spill.....	3

**Please note: The RVBC newsletter will not be published June-August. The next issue will be distributed to club members in early September.**

Visit our website:  
[roanokevalleybirdclub.com](http://roanokevalleybirdclub.com)

## APRIL MEETING

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

Please remember to bring paper towels and/or tissue to the meeting to help rehab wild birds. Thanks!



## Peggy Spiegel Opengari Memorial Dedication



We had beautiful weather for the dedication of Peggy Spiegel Opengari's memorial plaque on April 17 at Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center. A hummingbird, the first most of us had seen this year, put in an appearance.

Many thanks to Allen Austin for building a beautiful mounting for the plaque, to Barry Kinzie for sprucing up the site, and to Norris Ford for "planting" the pole in time for the dedication. We hope you will stop by and enjoy the plaque in its peaceful setting.

## Mark Your Calendar:

### RVBC Annual Picnic, August 8, 4 p.m.

Our annual RVBC picnic will be on Sunday, August 8th, 4:00 p.m., at the park shelter at Walrond Park. Bring a dish to share. Picnic tables under the shelter are available as are nearby restrooms. Please join us in celebrating the summer of 2010.

Walrond Park is located at 6824 Walrond Drive which is off of Plantation Road between I-81 and Williamson Road. Click on link for directions: <http://www.mapquest.com/mq/3-jNp00zFmxByM>

### RVBC Annual Seed Sale, Saturday, Nov. 6th, 10 a.m.- - 1 p.m.

### 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.

## NEXT MEETING:

**May 10, 7:00 p.m.**

**Grandin Court Baptist Church**

Join us to hear Dr. Sam and Liz Williams share photos and stories of their recent sojourn to Sitka, Alaska.

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

## **Roanoke Valley Bird Club 2011 Calendar: Get Your Entries Ready**

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Photos or artwork by members can be submitted at any time up to the September RVBC meeting on 9/13/2010.

The images should be in 8 x 10 horizontal (landscape) format suitable for scanning and reproduction. Please put a brief description on a label on the back of the submission indicating the subject, location and time of year (month or season) depicted. *Do not include any self-identifying information on the submission label.* Do, however, provide your name on an accompanying sheet. A committee will select the final images for the calendar from the received submissions. Submitted materials will be returned.

Please submit entries by September 13 to Carl Boast: 3368 Hickory Cove Lane, Moneta, VA 24121. Or give submissions directly to Carl at the May 10 meeting, the August 8 picnic, or any other time you see him on or before Sept. 13.

If you would like to be on the selection committee please contact Carl at:

[carlandlinda@earthlink.net](mailto:carlandlinda@earthlink.net) or phone: 540-297-7336.

### ***The Guide to Songbird Set-Up Photography***

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If you want to improve your bird photography consider this CD book by Alan Murphy. You'll learn how to attract songbirds and get them to land exactly where you want; how to photograph hummingbirds in flight without a flash; how to create set-ups for birds in open fields and grasslands; how to get close-up images of ducks, geese, rails, grebes, and other waterbirds; and how to set up for songbirds in flight. (And these are just a few of the tips.)



To see some of Alan's images go to: <http://www.alanmurphyphotography.com/favorites.htm>

*The Guide to Songbird Set-Up Photography* is available through Alan Murphy Photography. [www.alanmurphyphotography.com](http://www.alanmurphyphotography.com) for \$50.

Alan Murphy Photography  
78 West Tapestry Park Circle  
The Woodlands, TX 77381  
tel: 1-281-844-2611



*On April 19 this beautiful green gorget ruby-throated hummingbird was banded in Alabama. To see more go to [http://www.pbase.com/fdietrich/green\\_](http://www.pbase.com/fdietrich/green_)*

## **FIELD TRIPS**

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**CHAIRMAN**

**BOB MILLER 797-0462**

### ***Big Spring Day – May 1, 2010***

If you would like to join us for Big Spring Day please contact Eunice Hudgins at 389-4056 or [uvaau@aol.com](mailto:uvaau@aol.com) or Pam Wefel at 977-0636 or [pewefel@aol.com](mailto:pewefel@aol.com) to sign up. You'll meet new birders, discover new territories and may see a bird you have never seen before.

### ***Warbler Road, Sunday, May 9, 7 a.m.***

*This is a Sunday trip* and one of the most fun field trips of the year generally lasting through mid-afternoon. Extremely rewarding with lots of good views of warblers, tanagers and other migrants. Meet at the Bojangles at Botetourt Commons at 7:00 a.m. Tim and Alyce Quinn, leaders. There are few areas to pull off the road, so please carpool. Bring a lunch and some warm clothing (it may be chilly as we ascend to higher elevations).

### ***VSO Summer Field Trip Highland County, June 4-6***

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This is the first VSO field trip to Highland County. Field trips will be offered Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning. They expect to see warblers such as golden-winged, Canada, blackburnian, magnolia, chestnut-sided, black-throated blue and black-throated green. Other target birds include veery, warbling vireo, vesper and grasshopper sparrows, and bobolinks. Please register in advance. Non-VSO members are always welcome on VSO trips.

Contact Meredith Bell: [merandlee@cox.net](mailto:merandlee@cox.net)  
8270 Little England Road Hayes, VA 23072 • 804-642-2197. Website: [http://www.virginiabirds.net/f\\_trips.html#PG2010](http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html#PG2010)

## **FIELD NOTES**

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### ***Woodcock Watch, April 10***

Fourteen club members enjoyed a lovely late evening of birding on Bent Mountain. Highlights of the 20 species seen were: rusty blackbird, tree swallow, barn swallow, great blue heron, wood duck, meadowlark and chipping sparrow. but, alas, no woodcocks!! We need a new venue.

### ***Arcadia/Solitude, April 17***

On this breezy, cool and clear morning leader Bob Miller and ten other birders checked out this favorite Botetourt spot for spring migrants and other unusual sightings. Highlights were: warbling vireo, osprey, green heron, yellow-throated vireo, phoebe, Louisiana waterthrush,

golden-crowned kinglet, pine warbler, broad-winged hawk, and yellow warbler. Some of the group continued on to Middle Creek and found black-throated green warbler, blue-headed vireo, black-and-white warbler, blue-gray gnatcatcher and northern parula.

## **Sightings**

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*April:* Tim and Alyce Quinn sighted near their home in Burnt Chimney: a prairie warbler and a whip-poor-will. They also sighted Louisiana waterthrush, blue-gray gnatcatcher, palm warbler, blue-headed vireo, broad-winged hawk, and wood duck.

*April 15:* Barry Kinzie reported a scarlet tanager, yellow-throated vireo, and a northern parula at Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center. In Arcadia at North Creek campground, Barry spotted a large kettle of Broadwings. At the end of North Creek Road he heard 17 Louisiana waterthrush, 6 northern parulas, and 7 black-throated green warblers.

*April 16:* Barry Kinzie reported an American bittern at Gala Wetlands.

*April 16:* Carol Whiteside spotted a ruby-throated hummingbird on her property off Shingle Ridge Road.

*April 17:* Laurie Spangler sighted a ruby-throated hummingbird at her home in the Blue Ridge.

*April 26:* A blue grosbeak visited Tim and Alyce Quinn's feeder in Burnt Chimney.

## **Help that Wildlife-Friendly Garden Grow**

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### *Organic Llama Beans Available*

Need some organic manure for your garden or flower beds? Call Tim and Alyce Quinn at 719-0109 or e-mail them at [twoquinns@yahoo.com](mailto:twoquinns@yahoo.com). They have a never-ending supply of llama poo (delicately called llama beans) that makes great fertilizer. It doesn't burn plants so can be used fresh. It's recommended to compost it for a while for vegetables, but we know of several people, including ourselves, who have used it fresh with no ill effects.

## **Great Backyard Bird Count 2010 Results**

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During the four-day event in February, more than 97,200 bird checklists were submitted by an estimated 63,000 volunteer bird watchers across the U.S. and Canada.

This year American robins were recorded more than any other bird species—primarily because of a massive roost in St. Petersburg, Florida. 1,450,058 robins in Saint Petersburg alone. For perspective, the entire rest of the continent reported 400,321 robins. Reports such as

these help document hotspots for robins and year-to-year changes in their movements across the continent.

At the other extreme was the absence of other bird species, including winter finches such as pine siskins and redpolls. Last year, pine siskins moved south in great numbers. Over time, the GBBC has captured dramatic swings in the numbers of these species reported from year to year. These fluctuations may be influenced by the birds' food supply and reproductive success far to the north. This year, they presumably didn't need to travel as far south to find enough food.

The Eurasian collared-dove was reported in 9 states during the GBBC. This year more than 14,000 doves were reported in 39 states and provinces.

Tree Swallows showed dramatic increases in numbers reported compared to years past. Although the number of states reporting the species was down from 25 in 2009 to 20 this year, the number of individuals reported increased nearly four-fold, from 22,431 to 84,585. Whether this is a result of warmer temperatures and earlier migration is not yet clear.

*Source: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/science-stories/2010-results/>*

## **Harlequin Ducks Still Affected by Exxon Valdez Tanker Spill**

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The Exxon Valdez tanker ran aground on the Prince William Sound on March 24, 1989, spilling 10.8 million gallons of crude oil into the sea, covering 1,300 square miles. It is regarded as one of the most devastating human-caused contamination events.

Using the biomarker CYP1A, which is induced upon exposure to crude oil, researchers measured prolonged exposure to oil in local harlequin duck populations. Harlequins live in inter-tidal and shallow sub-tidal areas and are particularly sensitive to oil pollution. Their diet consists of invertebrates.

CYP1A levels were higher in areas oiled by the Exxon Valdez spill than in nearby areas. Researchers believe this shows harlequin ducks to be exposed to residual oil from the spill through at least 2009, twenty years after the event. Residual oil and its associated effects are not limited to a few years after spills, but for some vulnerable species may occur over decades.

*summarized from <http://www.sciencedaily.com>*

