



# October 2011 Newsletter

*Celebrating 54 Years  
of Birding! 1957-2011*

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Visit our club's website:  
[www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com](http://www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com)

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

Carol Whiteside shared photos of the release of a golden eagle at Harveys Knob last February and reported on the eagle's journey since the release.



## NEXT MEETING:

**October 11, 7:00 p.m.  
Grandin Court Baptist  
Church**

RVBC members Sid and Mary Lou Barritt will share pictures and stories of their trip to Alaska.

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

## RVBC Annual Seed Sale Fund Raiser November 5

**Seed Sale orders must be received by Monday, October 10.** The sale is open to the public, so please copy the form and distribute it to friends and neighbors. There will be a small supply of extra seed available the day of the sale for those unable to pre-order.

**The sale will take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Northwest True Value Hardware near Hollins on Route 11.** The store is a half mile south of the entrance to Hollins College. 7650 Williamson Road • Roanoke, VA 24019 • (540) 362-2112

**Seed Sale order form is enclosed. (The order form is also available on the RVBC website.)** Please complete the form and mail with your check, payable to Roanoke Valley Bird Club, to: Eunice Hudgins, 870 Stonegate Ct., Salem, VA 24153. Orders must be received by October 10. (Please do not send RVBC dues to Eunice. RVBC dues should be mailed to Eleanor Dye.)

If you would like to volunteer to help set up, keep track of orders, visit with the public, and load bags, please contact Alyce Quinn: [twoquinns@yahoo.com](mailto:twoquinns@yahoo.com) or phone: 719-0109; or Eunice Hudgins: [uvaau@aol.com](mailto:uvaau@aol.com) or phone: 389-4056.

## 2012 Annual Dues

It's time to renew your membership. Please complete the form on the back of the newsletter and send it and your check to **Eleanor Dye**.

## FIELD TRIPS

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CHAIRMAN

BETH GRIFFIN 265-4853

SHARE THE COST OF GAS WHEN YOU CARPOOL

### THE BIG SIT! Sunday, October 9

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Join us at Tim and Alyce Quinn's (719-0109) house in Burnt Chimney (arrive early to see the most birds) for this 24-hour stationary bird watching adventure.

The Big Sit! Is an annual, international event founded by the New Haven (CT) Bird Club, hosted by Bird Watcher's Digest, and sponsored by Swarovski Optik. Every team that observes this year's "Golden Bird" has a chance to win \$500.

*What's the Golden Bird?* After all of the Big Sit! results are tabulated, a bird species will be selected by random drawing from the total list of all species seen in North America. All of the circles that listed that bird will be put into another random drawing. The randomly selected winning circle wins the Golden Bird prize of \$500. The winner is required to choose a non-profit, environmental organization to receive the \$500 donated by Swarovski Optik.

The 24-hour count starts one minute after midnight the morning of the 9th, but people come and go all day. A light breakfast will be available starting at 7:00, as well as a potluck lunch around noon.

We use the event as a club fund raiser, collecting pledges for each species the team tallies during the event. Please call Eunice Hudgins at 389-4056 to make a pledge, or sign up at the event.

### October 29, 7:30 AM, Craig County

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Linda Cory (580-5214) and Eunice & John Hudgins (389-4056) invite you to join them for a trip to the Beaver Pond in Craig County.

Nestled in a lovely valley, this property, owned by George and Betsy Barker of Salem, includes open meadows next to woods, a

small pond, a narrow stream, and a marshy area. Spotting scopes are recommended. This is a trip for everyone. If you prefer not to do a lot of walking, you can sit on the front porch with John and watch the feeders in the huge front yard. Since the

Barkers feed them year-round, there are lots of birds. Meet at the Hanging Rock Orange Market at 7:30 AM to carpool. Due to the higher elevation, bring an extra jacket, hat and gloves. Bring a lunch and something to drink.

## SIGHTINGS

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*September 23:* Since Sept. 1, 3564 broadwings, 69 osprey, and 47 bald eagles have been sighted at Harveys Knob.

### Leave Your Hummingbird Feeders Up Until Late October

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This time of year, people begin to wonder how long they should leave their hummingbird feeders out for the birds that are now heading south. They wonder if by leaving



the feeders up too long they might encourage the birds to stay here longer than they should. But the birds know when to go and it will be safe. You should leave the feeders up at least until late October. The late migrants need food from

feeders especially when the flowers dry up. Our Augusta County extreme date for ruby-throated hummingbird is October 21, 1996.

Area residents reported many hummingbirds coming to their feeders. I did not put up a hummingbird feeder, but I planted bee balm, which has bright red flowers. I don't know how many I might have missed, but I counted from one to six each month beginning in June – the most in July. They came only one at a time, and went straight to the red flowers of the bee balm.

Then there was one on September 1, but there is only one blossom remaining on the bee balm. So when the flowers die, the feeders are crucial to the migrants.

*Yulee Larner*

*Reprinted from the Staunton News Leader 2010*

## Rockfish Gap Hawkwatch is Underway

The 36th Rockfish Gap Hawkwatch for fall 2011 was officially launched on Saturday August 21 and will run through Sunday, November 20. The hawkwatch began years ago, in 1976 when four members of the Augusta Bird Club spent six hours counting hawks from the lookout on Afton Mountain. They counted 764 hawks soaring overhead heading south. That year they spent just that one day at the hawkwatch. It is strange that they didn't return another day or days to see how many hawks might fly by.

The next year they spent four days, and finally in 1980, they watched for the hawks eleven days and counted 8,048. From that time on, more observers joined the group and totals soared. Several years they manned the lookout nearly 100 days. In 1983 I was lucky enough to be at the hawkwatch when we counted 33,613, a record number that was not broken until last year when the final total was 35,121.

So far they have identified seven species, including 11 bald eagles, 17 ospreys, over two hundred broad-winged hawks, northern harrier, sharp-shinned hawk Cooper's hawk, red-tailed hawk, American kestrel, and merlin. The peak counts of broad-winged hawks will be through mid-September. They fly up over the ridge, sometimes one bird, sometimes by the hundreds. This is the time of year that many visitors come from throughout Virginia, North Carolina, and other states.

If you have never been there, now is the time. The lookout site is on the patio back of the Inn at Afton. .

Usually twelve species are identified during the season. When the broad-wings are gone, the sharp-shinned hawks appear in October, as well as red-tailed hawks, eagles, ospreys and sometimes a rare species, the peregrine falcon.

Brenda Tekin and Vic Laubach are in charge of the Rockfish Gap lookout and report the records to HMANA, the Hawk Migration Association of North America. There are several lookouts in our mountains but Rockfish Gap is one of the most popular.

The hawkwatchers spend much time at the lookout – and many observers come just on weekends. Two of our problems are bad weather and the lack of enough observers. So, if you are interested, go up to the lookout on the weekend and count the hawks as they fly over.

The success of the annual event depends on good weather and observers who are free to come on weekdays.

*Yulee Larner*

*Reprinted from the Staunton News Leader*

### Directions to The Big Sit! Alyce and Tim Quinn's House:

After turning on to Edgewood Farm Lane (at a row of mailboxes): Go half a mile down this gravel road. When the road makes a 90 degree left turn onto Turkey Run, continue straight. You will go to the right of a dilapidated trailer. This is the beginning of the Quinn's driveway, and there is a bluebird box there with their house number, 681, on it. Drive between the trailer and the bluebird box. You can't see the house from the entrance, but go a quarter mile down the drive and you're there. Call Alyce's cell at 312-6844 if you get lost.



