



September 2012 Newsletter

*Celebrating 55 Years
of Birding! 1957-2012*

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Visit our club's website:
www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

May Meeting

Teta Kain presented a recap of her seventeen-day trip in autumn of 2002 plying the Antarctic seas searching for bird species found primarily near the Antarctic Circle.

RVBC Birders and Friends:

The Roanoke Valley Bird Club recently lost to death, three of its most active members: Mary Lou Agee, Bill Grant, and John Hudgins. All three were great birders and had been members of the club for years, participating in club activities and contributing to the club's success.

Mary Lou was a very active and enthusiastic birder. She traveled all over the country in search of new species for her life list. She participated in outreach activities and shared her birding enthusiasm with many.

For years Bill Grant headed the Club's outreach program and did much to spread the word about the fun and value of birding. His program on the "State of the Birds" was outstanding and helped focus attention on the problems confronting bird populations. Bill was also the Club's long time Vice-President of Programs.

The Club could always count on Bill to find interesting speakers and programs.

John Hudgins was a past President of the Club and a very active birder. He and his wife, Eunice, birded all over the United States and many foreign countries. One of his many fine qualities was his ability and patience in teaching bird identification. He was especially good with new birders and youngsters.

All three were great birders and good friends. We will really miss them.

Elly Wefel

September Meeting: Sept. 10, 7:00 p.m.

Grandin Court Baptist Church

Laura Beltran will show slides of Atlantic puffins, other shorebirds, and the Peatlands taken during Laura's trip to Maine.



(Laura Beltran, our Field Trip Chairman, will serve as our Interim Vice President of Programs through December 2012.)

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

2013 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**.

Welcome New Members

We are pleased to welcome Roger and Ellen Holtman, Jesse Williams, and David Brunstetter to the club.

Consider Running for Office

In 2013, the club will need a new Vice President of Programs and a newsletter editor. The newsletter doesn't require any fancy software; it can easily be done in Microsoft Word. We will also need three volunteers to form the nominating committee.

2013 RVBC Calendar Submissions Due September 10

Photos or artwork by members can be submitted to Carol Whiteside any time through the September 10, RVBC meeting. The images should be 8" x 10" horizontal (landscape) format suitable for scanning and reproduction. Please put a brief description on a label on the back, indicating the subject, location and time of year (month or season) depicted. Do not include any self-identifying information on the submission label, but do provide your name on an accompanying sheet as a committee will select the final images. Your submissions will be returned.

Please submit entries to: Carol Whiteside, 6487 Shingle Ridge Road, Roanoke, VA 24018 and you may inquire by calling Carol 540.774.2143 or e-mail: whitesidemules@yahoo.com The submission deadline is during the Sept. 10 meeting.

RVBC Annual Seed Sale Fund November 10

This is the Club's major annual fund raiser and we would greatly appreciate your support. Tell your friends, relatives and neighbors and spread the love of nature. You don't have to be a club member to purchase our bird seed. The proceeds help the club support community outreach efforts. You need not buy lots of seed but if you feed birds at all you will find the products **an excellent value**. *And if you don't have room to store lots of seed, consider buying a small bag.*

The Seed Sale will take place on November 10 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Northwest True Value Hardware Company near Hollins on Route 11.

The October newsletter will include the form for placing your orders. (The order form will also be available on the RVBC website.)

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 or phone: 719-0109.

Help Fill the Wild Bird Rehab Donation Box

A donation box will be at our club meetings. If your items are too large or heavy, let Maureen know (meiger@cox.net or 342-4890) and she will pick them up.

What's needed? Paper towels, tissues, bird seed, trash bags, old cloth towels, poke berries on the stem, etc. Refer to RVBC May 2012 newsletter for a list of items needed for Wild Bird Rehab.

If you prefer to make a tax-deductible donation, cash is acceptable or you can write a check made payable to Wildlife Care Alliance and in the memo section of the check, write "For Birds." You can mail or give your WCA checks to Maureen. Maureen Eiger, 2415 Mount Vernon Drive, Roanoke, Virginia 24015.

Hummingbird Migration Affected by Drought and Fires

This year's hummingbird migration is complicated by the lack of natural wildflowers which have been hit hard by drought and forest fires. Fewer wildflowers means fewer sources of nectar along migration routes. In difficult seasons like this, backyards feeders are welcome rest stops. Large numbers of birds are swarming feeding stations set up in gardens and backyards in drought areas particularly in the West.

Biologists aren't sure how the drought will affect hummingbird populations in the short term.

Summarized from CBS News article- Aug. 15

The Last Quiet Place

American Public Media's Krista Tippet interviewed acoustic ecologist Gordon Hempton on the program titled "On Being". The title is "The Last Quiet Places" and here's the link: <http://being.publicradio.org/programs/2012/last-quiet-places/>

Gordon Hempton discovered that the discreet bandwidth of supersensitive hearing in humans (2.5 to 5 khz) is a perfect match for bird song, i.e., we are not programmed to hear human voices best (which are usually lower in pitch), but bird songs. He theorizes that

we evolved that way because the presence of bird song is a primary indicator of habitats prosperous to humans. *(Thanks to Mary Harshfield for providing this information and link.)*

Recycled Book Sale

Thanks to Scott Spangler, we now have a cabinet to display our recycled bird and nature books at the meetings. These are books donated by members. Browse through them and if you find something you like, drop whatever amount it's worth to you in the box. This is an on-going fund raiser for the club, so check it out each time you attend a meeting.

In addition to the books for sale, there will be a display of magazines that members have donated. *These are free – take home as many as you like.*

The Big Sit! Saturday, October 13

(If the weather is bad on Saturday, the Sit will take place on Sunday at the Quinns) This 24-hour stationary bird watching adventure works like this: You sit inside a 17-foot diameter circle and count all the bird species you see or hear within a 24-hour period.

Join us at Tim and Alyce Quinn's (719-0109) house in Burnt Chimney. *(Arrive early to see the most birds.)* We'll have two circles set up to optimize our sightings. A light breakfast will be available (bagels, fruit, juice, coffee, etc.) at 7:00 and we'll eat lunch around noon. Feel free to bring a dish to share. You might want to bring a lawn chair. The count will go on for the 24-hour period starting at one minute after midnight the morning of October 14, and going till midnight that night, so come whenever you want, and stay as long as you want. If you plan to arrive before 7:00 a.m., though, please let them know so they can tell you where the circles are, 'cause the Quinns won't be out yet!

FIELD TRIPS

CHAIRMAN

Laura Beltran (266-3773)

SHARE THE COST OF GAS WHEN YOU CARPOOL

Hawkwatching at Harvey's Knob For Autumn

All Day Beginning Around 10 am

Expert hawkwatchers gather from the beginning of September until mid-November to count and watch for raptors at the Harvey's knob overlook at mile marker 95.6 off the Blue



Ridge Parkway. People of all birding skills are welcome to stop by and enjoy the hawkwatching. You may stay all day or just briefly. Don't forget to bring a lawn chair and lunch.

Monthly Mid-week Walk at the Cherry Blossom Trail, Botetourt County, Wednesday, September 12, 8:30 a.m.

Join Laura Beltran (266-3773) at the Cherry Blossom Trail in Botetourt County each month to see how the bird life changes from month to month. Off of 220 in Botetourt County, take the entrance to the Greenfield Education and Training Center (across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation). Park at the SECOND parking lot for the Cherry Blossom Trail on the right. The trip involves mostly flat walking for about 2 miles.

Fall Migrants at Harvey's Knob, Sunday, September 16, 8 a.m.

Since we have no assigned leader for this trip, we'll pool our skills and search for migratory songbirds along the parkway. Expect to walk 1-2 miles, carpool to different locations, and then return to Harvey's Knob to meet with expert hawk watchers. If you plan to stay and hawk watch, bring drinks, lunch, and a chair. Harvey's Knob is located at mile marker 95.6 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. For more information, call Laura Beltran at 266-3773. NOTE: SUNDAY TRIP.

Fall Migrants at the Peaks of Otter, Saturday, September 22, 8 a.m.

Meet leader Bill Hunley (774-2397) at the Peaks of Otter Lodge (not Visitor's Center) at 8:00. He will lead a leisurely stroll around Abbott Lake in search of fall migrants, including warblers. Expect about 1 mile of easy walking though the part through the woods is not level. Afterwards, those who desire can join us for breakfast at the Peaks of Otter Lodge. This is always an enjoyable trip.

Birding Botetourt County, Saturday, September 29, 7:30 a.m.

Club member Susan Kidd (966-0037) will host a field trip in Botetourt County. She has a great morning planned but wants to emphasize that she is just the host and birders will be expected to pool their skills to identify the birds. Because of the variety of habitats, spotting scopes and waterproof shoes are recommended. Meet at Botetourt Commons by the Bojangles at 7:30 am to carpool. From there we will head to Woodpecker Ridge, and then Greenfield before going to

her home outside of Fincastle. She has three acres including streams and forested areas and has had bobwhites, nesting red-tailed hawks and a pair of great blue herons among the 57 species she has sighted over the years. Susan has generously offered to provide a light lunch for the birders at her home at the end of the trip. Because this is a home with hardwood floors, please take off your shoes.

FIELD NOTES

Big Spring Day, May 5

The day was damp with temperatures in the mid-60s to low 70s with occasional light showers. This did not deter 57 people and 6,100 birds from their 42nd annual census. 126 species were counted.

New BSD records were set for bobolink (225), hermit thrush (3), cedar waxwing (749), mockingbird (106), blue-bird (123), and Canada goose (77).

Raptor numbers were low, probably due to the damp weather. 28 warbler species were recorded. Bobwhite numbers continue to be very low while wild turkeys seem to be increasing. For the first time, more black vultures (66) than turkey vultures (51) were counted. Other notable sightings were woodcock (3), black-billed cuckoo (4), great horned owl (3), barred owl (4), least flycatcher (1), bank swallow (35) and golden-crowned kinglet (1).

We had several new people participating this year. Thanks to all of you representing the Roanoke Valley Bird Club: Norris & Janie Ford, Sissy Logan, Susan Kidd, Tim & Alyce Quinn, Deborah Ingram, Mary Lou Barritt, Candy Andrzejewski, Barry Kinzie, Bob Miller, Ed Burroughs, Kent Davis, Mike Smith, John Pancake, Tom & Pat Johnson, Eunice & John Hudgins, Bill Opengari, Henry Woodward, Mary & Eric Harshfield, Liz Williams, Linda Barker, Carol Siler, Lynn Davis, Bill & Anne Tucker, Joanne Derryberry, Pat Popper, Nancy Verity, Dan James, Sally Evans, Joyce Holt, Bill & Katie James, Bill Grant, Bob & Andy Biggs, Elly & Pam Wefel, Dave Brunstetter and Dillard Childress.

Mark your calendars for May 4, 2013 – next Big Spring Day.

Jim Elder, Compiler

Arcadia and Solitude Road, May 9

Anne and Bill Tucker led birders to the James River bridge, Arcadia, Solitude swamp and the North Creek Camp-ground. They came up with 48 species, including good looks at red-eyed vireo, indigo bunting, and ovenbird.

Lick Run Greenway, May 12

It was a beautiful, cool, sunny morning to enjoy the variety of habitats on the Lick Run Greenway. Six birders joined the walk, and we saw a total of 35 species. Highlights included yellow-crowned night heron, barn swallow, gray catbird, wood thrush, veery, cedar waxwing, red-eyed vireo, northern parula, blackpoll warbler, common yellowthroat, common grackle, orchard oriole, indigo bunting, eastern towhee, field sparrow, and song sparrow.

Cherry Blossom Trail, Botetourt County, May 16

We had a wonderful spring trip along the Cherry Blossom Trail, walking around Greenfield Lake and into the fields beyond the lake observing a total of 55 species. Highlights included a female blue grosbeak, six grasshopper sparrows, Baltimore and orchard orioles, three female bobolinks, a yellow-breasted chat, two singing northern waterthrushes, a blue-gray gnatcatcher, several purple martins, six willow flycatchers, and a wild turkey.

Warbler Road, May 19

After getting notice that Warbler Road had been closed due to rain-damage, this trip was changed to checking out overlooks on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It was a clear 60-degree day with pink rhododendron in full bloom. Barry Kinzie, Eunice & John Hudgins, Sissy Logan, Liz Williams, Susan Kidd, Joanne Derryberry, John Pancake and Dave Brunstetter had a very successful morning of birding.

On the way up to the Peaks, Susan, Liz and Sissy spotted a bear cub in the road which was soon scared back into the woods by a passing motorcycle.

The group started birding at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center, stopping at the overlooks from Flat Top to Apple Orchard (the highest elevation on the Parkway in Virginia at 3,950 ft.). This is where we had excellent looks at a singing least flycatcher (normally only found in our area at elevations over 2,500 feet). Other birds seen or heard were: Nashville, Kentucky, prairie, worm-eating, Canada, black-poll, blackburnian, black-throated blue, chestnut-sided, hooded, cerulean, American redstart, northern parula, ovenbird, and black-and-white warbler, scarlet tanager, eastern phoebe, American robin, dark-eyed junco, eastern towhee, indigo bunting, red-eyed and blue-headed vireo, brown thrasher, northern mockingbird, common grackle, barn and northern rough-winged swallow, chipping sparrow, Acadian and great-crested flycatcher, mourning dove, American crow, northern oriole, gray catbird, tufted titmouse, white-breasted nuthatch, wood thrush, veery, east-

ern wood-pewee, brown-headed cowbird, northern cardinal, blue jay, cedar waxwing, rose-breasted grosbeak, American goldfinch, eastern bluebird, red-tailed, broad-winged and red-shouldered hawk, downy and pileated woodpecker, wild turkey, common raven, turkey and black vulture, European starling, Carolina chickadee, blue-gray gnatcatcher, and red-winged blackbird – for a total count of 60 species.



least flycatcher

Craig County, June 9

Under clear skies in the high 70s, birders enjoyed roaming “The Beaver Pond” property belonging to George and Betsy Barker of Salem. Hikes through the woods, grassy areas and along the bog, turned up a list of 49 species: Canada goose, red-winged blackbird, barn swallow, pileated woodpecker, cedar waxwings, eastern kingbird, eastern meadowlark, common grackle, blue jay, northern cardinal, eastern phoebe, field sparrow, song sparrow, Carolina chickadee, gray catbird, rufous-sided towhee, red-eyed vireo, scarlet tanager, eastern peewee, wood thrush, American robin, turkey vulture, ovenbird, downy woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, white-breasted nuthatch, American goldfinch, northern flicker, American crow, green heron, eastern bluebird, yellow warbler, blue-headed vireo, house wren, tufted titmouse, northern mockingbird, tree swallow, ruby-throated hummingbird, great blue heron, wood duck, willow flycatcher, common raven, blue-gray gnatcatcher, chipping sparrow, mallard, red-tailed hawk, rough-winged swallow, indigo bunting, and orchard oriole.

The porch, too, was a great spot for birding. Birds were drawn to the feeders and we watched red-bellied woodpeckers, downy woodpeckers and white-breasted nuthatches feeding young. Other sightings from the porch: eastern bluebird, phoebe, willow flycatcher, red-winged blackbird, wood duck, indigo bunting, hummingbird, cedar waxwing, blue jay, titmouse, chickadee, grackle, cardinal, goldfinch, song sparrow, turkey vulture, orchard oriole, and tree swallow – almost as many birds as the hikers saw.

Thanks to the leaders, Linda Cory and John & Eunice Hudgins; and the Barkers for their wonderful hospitality.

Cherry Blossom Trail, Botetourt County, July 11

The weather finally cooled off so we could have a relatively comfortable walk at Greenfield today for the July 11 bird club field trip. Highlights included wood duck, red-tailed hawk, killdeer, northern flicker, eastern kingbird, eastern phoebe, willow flycatcher, tree swallow, barn swallow, purple martin, gray catbird, brown thrasher, wood thrush, warbling vireo, yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, eastern meadowlark, Baltimore oriole, indigo bunting, and grasshopper sparrow.

Cherry Blossom Trail, Botetourt County, August 8

Although we only had three birders, we enjoyed a wonderful morning of summer birding at Greenfield Lake/Cherry Blossom Trail. The weather had finally cooled down, so we walked a large loop around Greenfield Lake. The total amount of species was 44, but not all of us saw everything, although we tried! Highlights included Great Egret, Worm-eating Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Pectoral Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow, and American Redstart.

SIGHTINGS

Early Aug.: Rupert Cutler saw a great crested flycatcher on the Lick Run Greenway near Lincoln Terrace School on Aug. 4.



great crested flycatcher

Aug. 5: While vacation in North Carolina, Bill

Hunley saw an eastern bluebird capture, kill and consume a juvenile skink. The skink was a juvenile at least 4 inches in length.

On *Aug. 12:* Rupert Cutler saw three eastern kingbirds near the Washington Park swimming pool. Also heard a red-eyed vireo sing as though it was spring, and saw dozens of robins.



least sandpiper

Aug. 18: Fred Cramer and Rupert Cutler saw 16 solitary sandpipers and approx. 30 least sandpipers on the mud flats at the Roanoke Waste Water Treatment plant.

Aug. 23: Barry Kinzie counted 145 common nighthawks at Woodpecker Ridge—the most he’s seen in years.

