

Roanoke Valley Bird Club



Celebrating
67 Years of Birding
1957-2024

Next Meeting:
January 8, 7:00 pm
Roanoke Council of
Garden Clubs

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

RVBC NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024

Happy New Year!



PHOTOGRAPHER
SHERMAN BAMFORD
CARVINS COVE, DECEMBER 2, 2023

BALD EAGLE

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

DREW'S BIRD OF THE MONTH

The Bald Eagle has been the national emblem of the United States since 1782 and a spiritual symbol for native people for far longer than that. These regal birds aren't really bald, but their white-feathered heads gleam in contrast to their chocolate-brown body and wings. Look for them soaring in solitude, chasing other birds for their food, or gathering by the hundreds in winter. Once endangered by hunting and pesticides, Bald Eagles have flourished under protection. (See page 3.)

~ The Cornell Lab



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

*Donald and Johanna Wilson
Ray and Lilly Tennant
Eric Coffey
Fred Fox*

Next Meeting:

MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 7:00 PM

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018

BIRDING TOUR OF EAST AFRICA WITH SCOTT WALKER

Our own RVBC member, Scott Walker takes us on a tour of East Africa focusing on birds and wildlife. Scott's interest in birds began when he earned the Bird Study merit badge in the Boy Scouts. He and his wife, Carol, have made birding trips to many parts of the U.S., Central America and Europe. This was their first experience with African bird life.

Scott remembers watching the Wild Kingdom show on TV as a kid and marveling at the videos of the East African plains, and the big game to be seen there. He always hoped to go there one day himself, and in 2023 that dream came true when Scott and Carol took a "bucket list" trip to Kenya and Tanzania.

Born in Roanoke County, graduated Cave Spring High School and Roanoke College, Scott moved to Pennsylvania where he and Carol lived for 40 years. Since their retirement they have returned to the Roanoke area.

Save the Date!

***Annual Raptor Count
February 10, 2024***

*The form and details will be in the
February Newsletter.*

CONTACT US!



ROANOKE VALLEY BIRD CLUB

**P.O. Box 20405
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA 24018**

Email: rvbc2015@outlook.com
www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS:

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Drew Daniels

Vice President, programs

David Frye

Vice President, memberships

Mary Harshfield

Secretary

Betty Burke

Treasurer

Carol Whitt

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Fraade, Sissy Logan**

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Carol Whiteside

Field Trips

David Frye

Meeting Refreshments

Mary Lou Barritt

Newsletter Editor

Carol Whiteside

RVBC/BRWS Annual Picnic

Carol Whiteside

Website:

Carol Siler

The RVBC Newsletter is published monthly **September through May** with the deadline for each issue on the **20th of the month** prior to that publication. Photos and articles are gladly accepted for publication as room allows, and may be sent electronically.

Thank you!

Carol Whiteside

Newsletter Editor

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whitesidemules@yahoo.com



President's Musings

Recently I was reading an article on birding and as usual my mind began to wander away from my reading. Have you ever thought about why people bird? I'm sure the pandemic was a major cause of the increase in birders. People could get outside by themselves and watch birds while not being in close contact with others. Birding is a great way to break "cabin-fever" while at the same time getting much needed exercise and breathing fresh air!

This got me thinking about the monetary affect birding has on businesses. Imagine there are in the neighborhood of 47 million birders in the United States. Now let's consider that 60% purchase a pair of inexpensive binoculars at say \$75.00 = \$211 million. Okay, now say 1% would purchase a spotting scope @ \$500 = \$23.5 million. Now let's estimate that 75% feed the birds. They purchase two bird feeders and a suet feeder along with feed say \$100 = \$3.225 billion. Now that's some serious money. This doesn't take into account the cost of photography equipment, accessories, guides, birding trips (during both migrations, including food, lodging, and travel), etc., and you can quickly see that suppliers, retailers and localities are making a lot of money off of birders, whether they be professional, amateurs, or just some-timers!

I read that of the 47 million birders the average age was 49 years. 47% were under the age of 49. US Fish and Wildlife stated that 16.2 million have become birders since 1995; that seems a little low considering the influx during the pandemic. Anyway, of that number 75% or 12 million go birding less than 10 times per year.

While these numbers are still large in the grand scheme of things, I am intrigued by the average age of birders at 49. At a time when organizations are diligently trying everything to lure younger people into their folds, it would appear that younger people are getting into birding, and that we, as a club, need to provide more to offer the younger clientele a stimulus to join and become active members. At 47 ± million, that works out to almost 1 million per state. It appears that we have a large group from which to draw. I think for the New Year that would provide our club with the opportunity to initiate programs to entice more people into our club, both younger and older! Sounds like a great New Year's Resolution to me!!! Let's put together some ideas!

Thank you for a great 2023 and I wish each of you a Happy, Prosperous and Healthy 2024!!!

President Drew Daniels
ddaniels2627@cox.net
540.314.6069

Sherman Bamford added, "The Bald Eagles were photographed from a canoe on the side of Carvins Cove reservoir north of the boat landing. I go there 15-20 times a year, but this is the first time I have seen eagles there."



DREW'S BIRD OF THE MONTH

Bald Eagle

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

Fall counts at Harvey's Knob have increased from 3-4 in the late 1970's to 90 in recent years. The best places to find Bald Eagles are at Carvins Cove, the James and Roanoke Rivers and other waterways. Status: Uncommon visitor and transient with records year round, fairly common during Sept. mainly at Harvey's Knob.

~Barry Kinzie's *Birds and Birding of the Roanoke Valley*



Sherman Bamford, photographer

To find Bald Eagles, head for water, where the birds are likely to be looking for fish. Nationwide, Bald Eagles are most widespread during winter, where they can be found along coasts, rivers, lakes, and reservoirs in many states. They winter in large numbers at some lakes and national wildlife refuges.

Rather than do their own fishing, Bald Eagles often go after other creatures' catches. A Bald Eagle will harass a hunting Osprey until the smaller raptor drops its prey in midair, where the eagle swoops it up. A Bald Eagle may even snatch a fish directly out of an Osprey's talons. Fishing mammals (even people sometimes) can also lose prey to Bald Eagle piracy. They occasionally hunt cooperatively, with one individual flushing prey towards another.

Had Benjamin Franklin prevailed, the U.S. emblem might have been the Wild Turkey. In 1784, Franklin disparaged the national bird's thieving tendencies and its vulnerability to harassment by small birds. "For my own part," he wrote, "I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen the Representative of our Country. He is a bird of bad moral Character. He does not get his living honestly. ... Besides he is a rank Coward: The little King Bird not bigger than a Sparrow attacks him boldly and drives him out of the District."

Bald Eagles build some of the largest of all bird nests—typically 5 to 6 feet in diameter and 2 to 4 feet tall, and ranging in shape from cylindrical to conical to flat, depending on the supporting tree. Both sexes bring materials to the nest, but the female does most of the placement.

The female has one brood of 1-3 dull white eggs that hatch covered with light-gray down; eyes brown; gape, legs, and skin pink. Immature Bald Eagles spend the first four years of their lives in nomadic exploration of vast territories and can fly hundreds of miles per day. Some young birds from Florida have wandered north as far as Michigan, and birds from California have reached Alaska.

Bald Eagles can live a long time. The oldest recorded bird in the wild was at least 38 years old when it was hit and killed by a car in New York in 2015. It had been banded in the same state in 1977.

~The Cornell Lab



Calendar of Events



Roanoke Valley Bird Club
Dave Frye, Vice President Programs, Field Trip Chairman, 248-459-6783

American Kestrel, Photographer **Garland Kitts**

Note: if inclement weather necessitates a cancellation, an e-mail notification will be sent out. You may also call or text the leader. Please do not call any of the trip leaders after 8 pm the night before the field trip, in consideration of having to get up early the next day to lead the field trip.

JANUARY 2024

- 1 **Monday New Year's Day Bird Count** - Start the year 2024 right by making a New Year's Day Bird List at the place of your choosing. This is not a group field trip or a competition, just a great way to start your birding year. If you haven't participated before, maybe this will be the start of a new tradition for you! Make a note of all bird species seen and/or heard between midnight of New Year's Eve and 11:59 pm on January 1. Email your resulting bird list with the location to rvbc2015@outlook.com. Highlights from your lists will go in the February newsletter. Everyone is encouraged to make a great start to 2024 by getting out and logging some New Year's Day birds! What else would you rather be doing?
- 8 **RVBC MEETING, Monday 7:00 pm.** Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs facility, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018. Featured Program: "**Birding Tour of East Africa**" with **Scott Walker**. See page 2 for details.
- 10 **Second Wednesday Midweek Walk at Greenfield, 9:00am. Leader: Dave Frye (248-459-6783).** Join us for a bird walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield. We will walk around Greenfield Lake in search for migrants and incoming waterfowl. The walk will be mostly flat, about 2 miles. We will also cover the grassy area overlooking the lake or the trail down to the lower pond. Bring your spotting scope, if you have one. **Directions:** Take Exit 150B on I-81 and follow signs to Route 220N. Go about 4 miles and turn left at the entrance to the Greenfield Education and Training Center, across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation. Park in the second lot on the right.
- 13 **Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant, Saturday 9:00am, Leaders: Kent Davis (540-353-6388) and Linda Cory (540-580-5214).** Join us for a walk around the Sewage Treatment Plant. Entrance to the STP is by special permit and trip participants must all enter at the same time and stay together with our leader. This site is one of the best spots for viewing shorebirds in the Roanoke Valley. The property includes impoundments, sludge ponds, mudflats, riparian habitat and woodlands. Besides shorebirds, we can expect to see resident hawks and possibly ravens and fish crows. The walking is mostly flat with a short steep trail. Sturdy waterproof boots are recommended as it often is muddy. **Directions:** Meet at the Greenway parking lot off of Bennington Street near the bridge over the Roanoke River; the entrance to the parking area is between the bridge and Brownlee Avenue. Note that Thirteenth Street SE changes names to Bennington Street at the bridge over the Roanoke River. After the group has gathered, we will caravan or walk the short distance to the STP, so please arrive minutes early.
- 27 **Botetourt Pond Hopping, Saturday 9:00am, Co-leaders: Tim (540-537-1831) and Alyce Quinn (540-312-6844).** Meet our co-leaders at Greenfield Lake. We will spend the morning visiting local ponds in search of wintering waterfowl and other avian life. Bring your scope, if you have one. **Directions:** Take Exit 150B on I-81 and follow signs to Route 220N. Go about 4 miles and turn left at the entrance to the Greenfield Education and Training Center, across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation. Park in the second lot on the right.

FEBRUARY 2024

- 2 **VSO Outer Banks Trip.** Weekend visit to the Outer Banks. Nags Head, North Carolina with VSO leaders: Meredith Bell, Lee Adams, Jerry Via and Bill Akers. See the Virginia Society of Ornithology website for more information.
- 10 **Annual Raptor Count** - Drive around the area within 100 miles of Woodpecker Ridge on Saturday (inclement weather date Sunday, Feb. 11). Earn points for each hawk you see. The tally sheet lists the various points awarded for the various hawks (included in the February newsletter). Try something different - grab your birding buddies and go out looking for raptors! No skill required because this isn't a contest! **Contact Anne Tucker (540-204-5693)** if you have any questions. The completed tally sheet can be emailed to billt3256@gmail.com or mailed to 3256 Lakewood Forest Rd., Moneta, VA 24121-2477.
- 10 **Greenfield Saturday 9:00 am. Leader: Barry Whitt (540-309-4353).** Join us for a Saturday morning bird walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield. This is one of the most diverse habitats anywhere in the Roanoke area—birdy at all times of the year. We will walk around Greenfield Lake and possibly to the pond beyond. The walk will be mostly flat walking for about 1 mile each way. Bring your spotting scope, if you have one. **Directions:** Take Exit 150B on I-81 and follow signs to Route 220N. Go about 4 miles and turn left at the entrance to the Greenfield Education and Training Center, across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation. Park in the second lot on the right.
- 12 **RVBC MEETING, Monday 7:00 pm.** Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018. Featured Program: "Attu - The Great Adventure" with Don Burrett.
- 14 **Second Wednesday Midweek Walk - Botetourt Center at Greenfield, 9:00 am. Leader: Dave Frye (248-459-6783).** Join us for a bird walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield. We will walk around Greenfield Lake and possibly to the pond beyond. The walk will be mostly flat walking for about 1 mile each way. Bring your spotting scope, if you have one. **Directions:** Take Exit 150B on I-81 and follow signs to Route 220N. Go about 4 miles and turn left at the entrance to the Greenfield Education and Training Center, across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation. Park in the second lot on right.
- 17 **Evergreen Bird Hike - Evergreen Burial Park, Wasena, Sat. 9:00am. Leaders: Kent Davis (540-355-6388) and Linda Cory (540-580-5214).**

CLUB MEMBERS SHARING NIGHT

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023

Iris Daniels, photographer

December is always members sharing night of photos, videos, stories, snacks and more. There were birding programs for the outstanding attendance of nearly 70 members who brought an abundance of holiday treats while The Ukuladies entertained the crowd!



President Drew featured his "Holiday Flamingo" sweater



The Ukuladies L-R: Linda Cory, Kathy Clemo, Mary Harshfield
The trio formed four years ago after a discussion on a birding field trip while realizing they all also enjoy playing the ukulele. Their love of music branches to other instruments as well, including the piano (Linda Cory), steel drum (Kathy Clemo) and violin (Mary Harshfield).



Field Trip Report

Wednesday, December 13, 2023
Greenfield Lake at Botetourt Center
Dave Frye, Leader



Cold morning weather loosened its grip and allowed for sweatshirts and light jackets as four members made their way through the sunshine and diverse habitat that surrounds Greenfield Lake. Thirty five species were observed during the walk. The group was very happy to see that the winter season has started to bring more ducks into the area. Mallards, Gadwalls, Ring-necked Ducks, Pied-billed grebes, and 22 Green-winged Teals floated the surface of the chilly waters. The group also took in great views of 3 Great Blue Herons and 3 Belted Kingfishers. Hermit Thrush, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Dark-eyed Junco, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker rounded out the highlights.



Roanoke Valley Bird Club
P.O. Box 20405
Roanoke, VA 24018



Roanoke Valley Bird Club

Membership Application/Renewal Form

Memberships expire on August 31, each year

2024

(Current Year)

Please print

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

*Email _____

*Required to receive newsletters and communications

Annual Dues are as follows:

- Individual \$15
- Family \$25
- Student under 18 - No Charge

Additional Contribution \$ _____

Adopt a Bluebird \$ _____

Total Payment \$ _____

Make check payable to:
Roanoke Valley Bird Club

Mail To:
Roanoke Valley Bird Club
P.O. Box 20405
Roanoke, VA 24018

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com