

Roanoke Valley Bird Club



Celebrating
67 Years of Birding
1957-2024

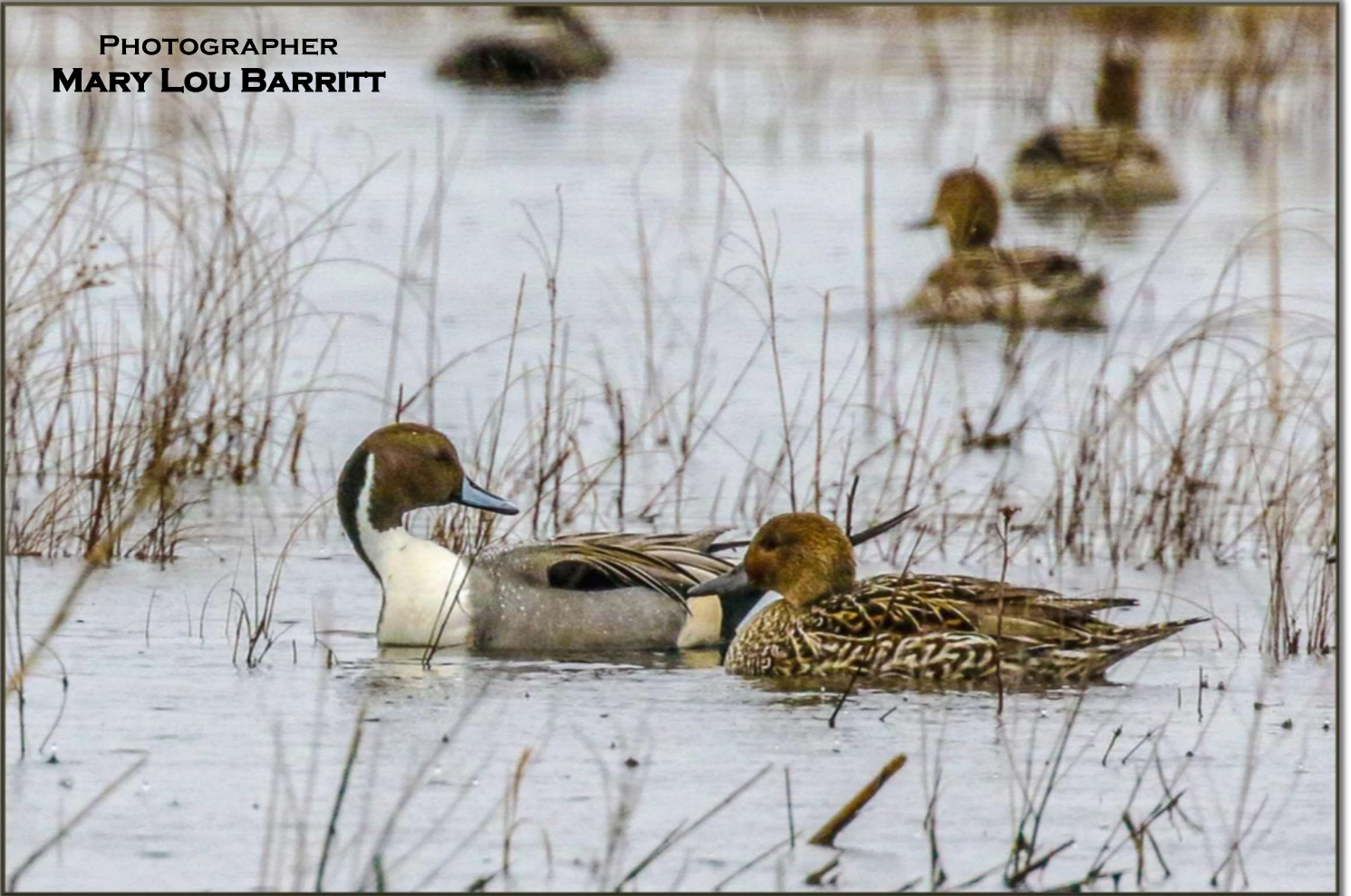
Next Meeting:
October 14, 7:00 pm
Roanoke Council of
Garden Clubs

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

RVBC NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2024

PHOTOGRAPHER
MARY LOU BARRITT



DREW'S BIRD OF THE MONTH **NORTHERN PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*

Elegant Northern Pintails swim through wetlands and lakes with their slender necks and long, pointed tails held high. Intricately patterned and pale-faced females join males fashioned with a signature white stripe down their chocolate-colored necks. These eager breeders head to the prairie pothole region of the Great Plains, as well as Canada, and Alaska to nest as soon as the ice breaks up. Large groups congregate in wetlands, lakes, bays, and even waddle through agricultural fields eating grains during the winter. Though still common, their populations are declining.
(Please see page 3.)

~The Cornell Lab



Next Meeting:

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14
7:00 PM

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

"Using Forestry to Increase Bird Diversity for Conservation"

with Dr. Steven C. Latta

Our October Membership Meeting speaker will be Dr. Steven Latta, from the National Aviary in Pittsburgh PA, where he serves as Director of Conservation and Field Research. He will describe to us new ways of restoring forest structure, highlighting testing of a different model of sustainable forest management that uses multiple entries into the forest for very light timber harvests. The hypothesis being that by creating very small, 1-5 acre gaps in the forest through group selection cuts, we can provide habitat opportunities for important early, successional species, as well as habitat for dispersing fledglings of mature forest species. If successful, this approach will have the added benefit of restoring forests to an uneven, aged condition that is beneficial to many more species that require structurally diverse forests. This forest management style also supports families and landowners with small forest plots, and the economic viability of rural communities through the restoration of working forests.

Dr. Latta is a native of Northern Michigan, and was educated at Kalamazoo College, the University of Michigan, and University of Missouri. After serving for 4 years as Director of the Latin American Program at Point Reyes Bird Observatory, he came to the National Aviary in 2006. Steve works extensively on Hispaniola, and across the Caribbean islands and Latin America, where his research has focused on understanding how migrant and resident species respond to natural and anthropogenic changes to habitat. Steve is very interested in understanding how we can balance avian conservation with human needs through agroecology and agroforestry. In 2019, he began a collaboration with Project Principalis in a search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Louisiana. He has authored several books on the birds of Hispaniola, published more than 175 articles and book chapters, and continues to dedicate himself to training young biologists in developing countries in field research and avian monitoring techniques.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Jan Kinsey	David MacNamee & Family
Briana Newsome	Autumn Richards
Regina Carson	Donna Haley
Kathleen Wood	Richard & Catherine Hach
Stephanie Frank	

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY CLOSED

Due to the devastating storm damage from Helene on Friday, September 27, the Parkway is currently impassable, including our district. Communications from headquarters in Asheville, NC, have been strained, and the Park website is down, all due to flooding and the loss of power and cellular service in Asheville. This is peak season for hawk watching and for the Park's leaf-peeper 16 million visitors annually. Although we know the Park will do everything possible to open as soon as it becomes safe, there has been no official word available yet. ~Carol Whiteside

CONTACT US!



ROANOKE VALLEY BIRD CLUB

P.O. Box 20405
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA 24018

NONPROFIT 501(C)(3)

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

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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 in JPG and word docx.

Thank you!
Carol Whiteside
Newsletter Editor

540.774.2143
whitesidemules@yahoo.com



President's Musings

While meeting with the Calendar Committee yesterday, I was blown away by the quality of the photography that was submitted by our members. We arranged the top vote achievers into the month that we thought would be most appropriate, and then screened them again to double check ourselves. As I looked over the array of photos, I thought this is right in line with the quality of the calendars we receive from The National Audubon Society and The Cornell Lab every year. Wow!!!

Being a rank amateur and self-taught photographer, I truly appreciate the training and artistic ability of our members. Their creativity and mastery of the art of photography is extraordinary, and each of you are to be congratulated for your accomplishments!!!

We had birds this year from not only Virginia, but worldwide. We discussed this after finishing our work on the calendar and decided that maybe next year we would limit the pictures to just those taken in Virginia. The following year we would accept photos of birds from all over the world including Virginia. This is something that we will discuss at our next meeting as the membership should have a say in how they would like to see their calendar. With almost 500 species of birds in Virginia, there is a plethora of photo opportunities around every corner, just something to think about before the next meeting.

President Drew Daniels
ddaniels2627@cox.net
540.314.6069



Mary Lou Barritt, Photographer

DREW'S BIRD OF THE MONTH *Northern Pintail*

Anas acuta

"Status: Fairly rare spring and fall transient and winter resident."

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



Mary Lou Barritt, Photographer

Northern Pintails seem to be at home on land and water; they waddle through fields and swim gracefully with the tail pointed upwards. They erupt in flight from the water's surface at a moment's notice, wheeling and darting through the air on their slender wings. Northern Pintails are generally social birds and rarely fight with other ducks. But when one male threatens another, they jab at their rival with their bill open and chase them with their head hanging low, just above the surface of the water. Males and females also lift their chins to greet each other and sometimes tip their chins when threatened. Pairs form on the wintering grounds, but males often mate with other females on the breeding grounds, and pairs only stay together for a single breeding season. Courting males stretch their necks up and tip their bills down while giving a whistle call. Males also preen behind their wing to expose the green speculum. Interested females follow males with head bobbing, preening, and clucking. Groups of males and females also chase each other in flight, flying high and ranging far afield. While females are still incubating, males leave their mates and begin forming flocks with other males in preparation for migration. They migrate in groups, forming long, wavy lines. Northern Pintails migrate at night at speeds around 48 miles per hour. The longest nonstop flight recorded for a Northern Pintail was 1,800 miles. The oldest recorded Pintail was a male, at least 22 years, 3 months old in 1994.

~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. Field Trips begin at 8:00am unless otherwise announced; morning field trips in December through March will begin at 9:00am. Thank you.

OCTOBER 2024

Hawk Watching continues - Located at Harvey's Knob Overlook, milepost 95.3 on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

From September through November, our club and the Lynchburg club report data on the hawk migration at Harvey's Knob Overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway. All are welcome to join our resident hawk watchers to see how it is done. Bring a lawn chair, binoculars, and a spirit of adventure for learning about the annual hawk migration. You are welcome to show up any day, arrive and leave when you like, and even though you may not be ready to ID each hawk as it passes, extra eyes are ALWAYS needed.

2 Wednesday "Are Trees the Best Medicine For Healthy Neighborhoods" VA Western Community College, 6pm (See page 7 for details).

5 Saturday Walk at Dodd Creek Trail, 7:00am. Leaders: Kirk Gardner (828-216-9170) and Kent Davis (540-355-6388)

Floyd County is the destination for this Saturday morning trip. We'll explore the Dodd Creek Trail, an area that we've not visited before (at least not lately), in search of resident birds and fall migrants passing through.

Directions: Meet at 7:00 am. in the parking lot of the Cave Spring Corners Kroger supermarket, just north of Electric Rd on Brambleton Ave (park near the fence along Brambleton) to car-pool to the park from there.

9 Second Wednesday Midweek Walk – Garst Mill Park, 8:00am. Leader: David Frye (248-459-6783)

We will be alternating months on the second Wednesday at a local Roanoke Park. Join us for a stroll along the Greenway within Garst Mill Park. We will be looking for resident songbirds and woodpeckers. The path meanders beside the length of Mud Lick Creek and may offer opportunities to view puddle ducks and a heron along its banks.

Directions: From Brambleton Avenue at Cave Spring Corners (just north of Electric Road), turn left onto northbound Garst Mill Road. Turn left onto westbound Halevan Road. Then the park entrance is the first left.

14 RVBC MEETING, Monday 7:00 pm. Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018.

Featured Program: **Using Forestry to Increase Bird Diversity for Conservation with Dr. Steven Latta.**

Steven Latta works for the National Aviary in Pittsburgh, PA where he is the Director of Conservation and Field Research. He will discuss with us possible revisions to forestry policy/planning that can improve diversity and overall health of bird populations.

19 Saturday - Bent Mountain Center, 8:00am. Leader: Robin Austin (540-676-0951)

Join Leader Robin Austin as she takes us on a hike on Bent Mountain. Things are just different up on the mountain!

Directions: Meet in the parking area at **Bent Mountain Center, 10148 Tinsley Lane** (south on Route 221, turn west onto Mill Creek Road, turn right onto northbound Tinsley Lane).

26 Saturday at Fenwick Mines, 7:15am. Leader: Bill Hunley (540-467-3477)

Bill Hunley will take us through one of our favorite areas for birding, Fenwick Mines. The road that runs alongside the abandoned mine area is always productive, and the wooded site itself, can provide diverse sets of birds, including a meandering creek with a boardwalk that reliably has Winter Wrens.

Directions: Meet in the car park area at the Orange Market in Hanging Rock at 7:15am (junction of Routes 419 and 311).

NOVEMBER 2024 (A QUICK LOOK AHEAD)

1-2 VA Bluebird Society Biennial Conference, Glen Allen, VA, Speaker Myrna Pearman, Contact: Vallerie K. Gaffney, vbs@virginiabluebirds.org

2 Saturday Hike at Ellett Properties, 8:00am. Leader: Sissy Logan (540-353-4500) A visit to lovely private grounds stretching from Mud Lick Road to Brandon Avenue.

4 RVBC MEETING, Monday 7:00 pm. Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018. (Date revised due to facility conflict.) Featured Program: George and Kathy Clemo – Cuban Adventure The Clemos recently vacationed in Cuba, and are eager to tell our membership all about it (and its birds!). Expect terrific photography and a few stories from their journey to what, for decades, has been an "off-limits" part of the Caribbean.

9 Saturday Walk – Tinker Creek Greenway, 8:00am. Leaders: Sid and Mary Lou Barritt (540-354-6004) A fall walk along the Greenway in Vinton.

13 Wednesday Midweek Walk – Greenfield, 8:00am. Leader: David Frye (248-459-6783). Our routine visit to the Cherry Blossom Trail.

23 Saturday Hike – Waid Park, 8:00am. Leaders: Tim and Alyce Quinn (540-537-1831) A trip to an under-birded park in Franklin County.

30 Saturday Birding in Roanoke City, 8:00am. Leaders: Kent Davis (540-355-6388) and Kirk Gardner (828-216-9170). Kent leads us to some unique and forgotten spots that can be surprisingly "birdy."

William Byrd High School's - Byrd Birders Club

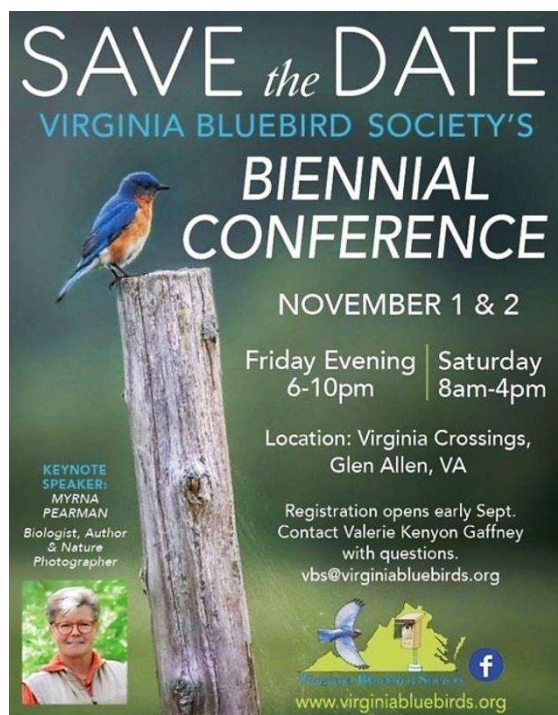
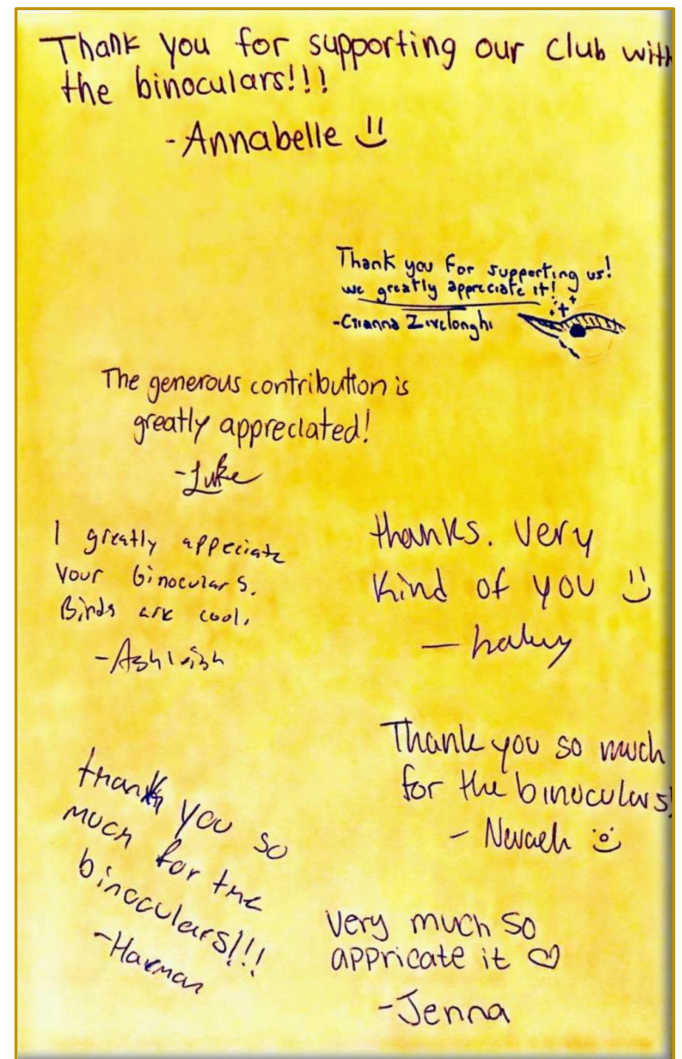
Maryjean Sullivan

The Byrd Birders Club met after school for the first time on Thursday, September 26. Due to the approaching bad weather from Hurricane Helene, I didn't expect any students to come to this meeting. However, eight students bounded into my classroom after a long school day, ready to head outside and walk around in the wet grass and muddy fields. Annabelle, Gianna, Luke, Ashleigh, Haley, Nevaeh, Jenna, Harman, and I had a blast. Repeatedly, I heard the students say how much they loved being outside, how relaxing it was to watch birds, and how they couldn't wait to go birding again. There was a lot of laughter and positive energy.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of the Roanoke Valley Bird Club's birding backpack fund, our club has 10 new binoculars on loan. **Maxine Fraade** handed off the binoculars to me this past weekend, and the teens were very impressed and thankful for the opportunity to use such good quality equipment. Nevaeh said, "These are the real deal!" Immediately, we spotted American Crows, Starlings, and Turkey Vultures. After they got used to focusing their binoculars, we spotted Black Vultures, Chipping Sparrows, Palm Warblers, Northern Cardinals, Killdeer, Eastern Bluebirds, Carolina Wrens, and a Downy Woodpecker. We also heard a White-Breasted Nuthatch and a Red-Bellied Woodpecker. In just half an hour, every student spotted a bird they had never seen before.

The students said "Thank you" many times over and also wrote out a thank you card to all of you. **Dave Frye** has been approved by our school's principal to volunteer and lead us on bird walks around the school, and he'll be joining us this coming Wednesday! Our goal is to find that elusive Red-Bellied Woodpecker. Thanks to all of you for supporting the next generation of birders!

RVBC Member, Maryjean Sullivan, established the Byrd Birders Club.



Eastern Bluebird

Carol Whiteside, Photographer

September Highlights

Field Trip Reports ~

Wednesday, September 11, Greenfield Hike with Leader, Dave Frye - A group of five birders spent a beautiful morning on the Cherry Blossom Trail alongside Greenfield Lake and on into the wooded areas beyond. The group gathered views of 31 species, along with a couple that we were not too sure of (perhaps early fall plumage changes blurred things for us?). Highlights from the trip include over 220 Canada Geese (why were we still counting at that point?), Wood Ducks, Green Herons, Great Blue Herons, Warbling Vireo, Cedar Waxwings, and Cape May and Black-throated Blue Warblers.

Meeting Notes ~

Monday, September 9, "Gardening For Birds" with Dr. Robyn Puffenbarger

With fifty people in attendance, Dr. Robyn demonstrated with a truly interesting and animated personality as she helped us understand that by making our yards more bird, pollinator and wildlife friendly, we encourage other creatures to linger in our spaces. Just a few additions can make our backyard an interesting, welcoming environment for birds. Additionally, we were reminded that our November Meeting will be a week earlier on November 4, due to a facility conflict. We learned that William Byrd High School has established a bird club, an outgrowth from our Library Birding Backpacks Program. (More information on page 5.)



Iris Daniels, Photographer

Reminder

Don't forget we crave

**Snacks
and
Little Drawing Gifts**

Please bring for the meeting

Reminder

DUES ARE DUE!

Memberships expired on August 31

Individual \$15, Family \$25, Student No Charge

Mail checks to:

Roanoke Valley Bird Club

P.O. Box 20405, Roanoke, VA 24018

Or bring to the October 14, meeting

(Include membership form on last page)

Or pay on the web: www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com



ARE TREES THE BEST MEDICINE FOR HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS?

Wednesday, October 2

6 PM · Virginia Western Community College

You are invited to hear **Dr. Aruni Bhatnagar** discuss his research on
“The Natural Environment and Human Health.”

Dr. Bhatnagar leads the Green Heart Louisville health research initiative. After planting over 8,000 trees and shrubs, his team has collected detailed health data from nearly 500 residents since 2018. The 15 million dollar project includes state, local and federal agencies, several non-profits and universities and over 50 researchers. They are looking at how trees affect air pollution, sleep, stress and anxiety, blood pressure and cardio health.

Dr. Bhatnagar, a featured speaker at the 2023 World Forum on Urban Forests, is Professor of Medicine and Distinguished University Scholar at the University of Louisville. Working with collaborators around the world, he spearheaded the development of the new field of Environmental Cardiology which links the risk of heart disease to natural, social and personal environments.

FREE ENTRY, FREE PARKING in lot 9 behind Chapman Hall (SEE MAP BELOW)

Doors open at 5 for the public to enjoy information from sponsors and partners.

Enter **Webber Hall** and follow signs to **Whitman Auditorium**.

For more information please contact: info@millmountaingardenclub.org.

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Park in lot 9 (located behind Chapman Hall) and enter in Webber, go through the breezeway into Business Science building (M). Use the elevator to go to the 1st floor which brings you to Whitman Auditorium.

Roanoke Valley Bird Club

2025 Calendar

We are excited to offer the Roanoke Valley Bird Club 2025 Calendar with 25 amazing photos taken by and voted by our members, for only \$16. We accept cash, check or credit card. The "Calendar Sneak Peak" photos and order form are on our website. The calendars may be ordered or purchased in three convenient ways:

1. **In person** at the RVBC meetings on October 14, November 4 and December 9. There will be a "pick up day" at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs facility on November 16 and December 14, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.
2. **Online** at www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com. To order without postage, click on the yellow "Add to Cart" button. If you want to have your calendar mailed, click on the down arrow in the box for more options.
3. **Mail** with check, the completed form below to: R.V.B.C., P.O. Box 20405, Roanoke, VA 24018.



2025 Cover photo

If you are ordering more than 4 calendars, please email rvbc2015@outlook.com to get the more accurate (and lower) shipping cost.



2025 CALENDAR ORDER FORM

R.V.B.C., P.O. Box 20405, Roanoke, VA 24018



of Calendars _____ X \$16.00 if picking up = \$ _____

of Calendars _____ X \$18.50 if shipping = \$ _____

If being mailed, send calendars to:

Name _____

Address _____

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

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

RVBC NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2024

Roanoke Valley Bird Club

Membership Application/Renewal Form

Memberships expire on August 31, each year

2025

(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