

Roanoke Valley Bird Club



Celebrating
67 Years of Birding
1957-2024

Next Meeting:
December 9, 7:00 pm
Roanoke Council of
Garden Clubs

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

RVBC NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2024



PHOTOGRAPHER
CAROL WHITESIDE



PHOTOGRAPHER
GARLAND KITTS

CAROLINA CHICKADEE

Poecile carolinensis

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE

Poecile atricapillus

DREW'S BIRDS OF THE MONTH

Carolina and Black-capped chickadees hybridize in the area where their ranges overlap, but the two species probably diverged more than 2.5 million years ago. The Carolina's territory is generally in the Southeastern U.S. while the Black-capped is primarily found in the northern half of America. Chickadees are one of the easiest birds to attract to feeders, for suet, sunflower, and peanuts. About half of their diet consists of animal matter insects/spiders and half is plant matter seeds/berries. Both species may be found in deciduous and mixed deciduous-coniferous woodlands, swamps, riparian areas, open woods and parks, and also in suburban and urban areas. They are box nesters, having only one brood a year consisting of 3 -11 white with brown speckled eggs. (Please see page 3 for details.)

~The Cornell Lab

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Jan Kinsey

Rodelin Palmer

Mark Bullock

Next Meeting:

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

7:00 PM

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

Featuring:

CLUB MEMBERS SHARING NIGHT

December's meeting is members sharing night. Please bring a holiday treat to share and your favorite photos, videos and stories of birding adventures. If you have a digital presentation, please bring it on a flash drive and we will run it for you. Feel free to share a birding story or an exciting item to show the club. Please email President Drew Daniels with your estimated time to reserve your space.

Email: ddaniels2627@cox.net

There is one other surprise agenda item on the docket. This will be a fun evening of sharing our love of birds and wildlife while enjoying delicious snacks!

Happy Holidays



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ROANOKE VALLEY BIRD CLUB

P.O. Box 20405
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA 24018

NONPROFIT 501(C)(3)

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

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS:

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David Frye

Vice President, memberships

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Field Trips David Frye

Meeting Refreshments Mary Lou Barritt

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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 in JPG and word docx. **Photography is by our members.**

Thank you!

Carol Whiteside
Newsletter Editor

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President's Musings

President Drew Daniels
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I recently read a very interesting article in *Scientific America* titled “Fate of The Hybrid Chickadee” by Rebecca Heisman. The article dealt with the hybridization of the Black-capped Chickadee and the Carolina Chickadee in areas where their ranges overlap called the “hybrid zone.” Usually in the Animal Kingdom, when members of the same species mate and produce offspring, the offspring is normal individuals, and can reproduce and function with some of the same traits as their parents. Cases in point are some of the warblers, for example: the Blue-winged Warbler X Golden-winged Warbler producing a Brewster’s Warbler in the first generation, and a backcross with one of the parent species to produce a Lawrence’s Warbler. Mallards have also been known to mate with over 40 other species of ducks – good luck with identification!

Just as a sideline to the article and to put some perspective in this musing, our club went on a bird walk to Fenwick mines with Bill Hunley as our guide. Bill astutely pointed out as we walked that we were in a “hybrid zone” for the Black-capped Chickadee and the Carolina Chickadee. Rather than try to identify a hybrid, we would just use Chickadee species, which covers all three.

The article goes on to report that in the 1990s ornithologists began to realize through repeated surveys by bird watchers that the hybrid zone was moving. It was then that Robert Curry, an ornithologist and behavioral ecologist at Villanova University, embarked on a study of hybrid chickadees. He set up three field sites in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey (Virginia wasn’t included). He found while studying the hybrid offspring of both chickadee species that the hatching rate per nest decreased, and in many cases only one egg out of eight in the nest hatched.

Curry then enlisted the help of postdoctoral researcher Scott Taylor at Cornell University, who used the analysis from the eBird platform to determine that the chickadee hybrid zone was indeed moving due to climate change with warmer winters slowly moving north.

The question remains – Will hybrid bird species be able to adapt to the increasing temperature changes moving north?



Joanie Kinser, Photographer

DREW’S BIRDS OF THE MONTH

Field Mark	Black-capped Chickadee <i>Poecile atricapillus</i> “Status: Uncommon and irregular spring and fall transient and winter visitor. Very rare and isolated summer resident.” ~Barry Kinzie’s <i>Birds and Birding of the Roanoke Valley</i>	Carolina Chickadee <i>Poecile carolinensis</i> “Status: Common permanent resident.” ~Barry Kinzie’s <i>Birds and Birding of the Roanoke Valley</i>
Size & Shape	A small (avg. 5.25" long), acrobatic bird with longer tail and (to some observers) a proportionately larger head.	The smallest (avg. 4.75" long) North American chickadee with a proportionately smaller head and shorter tail.
Wing Coverts	In fresh plumage (in the autumn and early spring) the greater wing coverts and secondaries are broadly edged in white, forming what appears to be a long white patch.	The greater wing coverts are more uniformly grey and show less white, lending a plainer look to the upper parts.
Sides of Nape	Mostly white on sides of nape.	Mostly greyish on sides of nape.
Bib	The lower edge of the black bib is generally less defined than on a Carolina Chickadee and appears uneven.	The bib is generally smaller, although there is some individual variation in bib size in both species. There is also a neat line of separation between the bib and belly, although this character may be obscured in very worn birds (especially in summer).
Buffy Sides	Noticeable buffy coloration under the wings	The cinnamon-buff coloring under the wings is less developed on the Carolina Chickadee (but fresh adults in the northeast part of its range show brighter cinnamon and can be confused with Black-capped).
Tail	The outer tail feathers are more broadly edged with white.	Less white on outer tail feathers. Sometimes the tail may appear completely gray.

~ The Cornell Lab, Project FeederWatch



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

**Also, please be careful when walking into the wilds of Virginia as Firearms Deer Season is in effect, and hunters could very well be in the vicinity. Bright colored clothing and walks on a well-groomed trail are good practices.*

DECEMBER 2024

- 7 Saturday Walk at Greenfield Lake, Botetourt Center, 9:00 am. (Note: Winter start time change.) Leader: Barry Whitt (540-309-4353)**
Join Barry for a bird walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail. 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 1-81 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.
- 9 RVBC Membership Meeting, Monday 7:00pm** Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018.
Member Sharing Night – Please bring a holiday treat as we marvel at the talents of our own bird and wildlife photographers' favorite photos, and videos and stories of your birding adventures. One other surprise agenda item is on the docket.
- 11 Second Wednesday Stroll through Highland Park, 9:00 am. (Note: Winter start time change.) Leader: David Frye (248-459-6783)**
Join us for a gentle walk through a beautiful local park in Old Southwest. We should see lots of familiar birds that we love, as well as a surprise or two in this nicely wooded park area. The park has paved trails, but is hilly and a bit uneven. Please wear sturdy shoes and dress for the December weather. Meet in the parking lot on the north side of the park.
Directions: Heading from west bound Elm Ave. SW turn onto southbound 5th St SW. The park is located 3 blocks south and the car park entrance is immediately beyond Washington Ave. SW at a partial right 45 degree turn onto Joel Richert Way.
- 14 & 15 RVBC Annual Christmas Bird Counts in Roanoke and Fincastle.**
Leaders/Compilers: Bill Hunley - Roanoke (wjhunley@gmail.com) and Andrew Newcombe – Fincastle (anewco15@gmail.com).
Volunteers participate in survey counts within their specific assigned territories and forward the results to the compilers.
- 29 Sunday at the Sewage Treatment Plant, 9:00 am. (Note: Winter start time change.) Leaders: Kent Davis (540-353-4500) and Kirk Gardner (828-216-9170).** Where else would you rather be during the Holidays? Join us for a walk around the Sewage Treatment Plant. The entrance to the STP is by special permit and trip participants must all enter at the same time and stay together with our leaders. 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.

JANUARY 2025 (A QUICK LOOK AHEAD)

- 1 New Year's Day Bird Count.** Everyone is encouraged to start the New Year off right and GO BIRDING!
- 8 Second Wednesday Bird Hike – Greenfield 9:00 am. Leader: David Frye (248-459-6783)** Join us for a bird walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail. We host this trip every other month on Wednesdays and can see the populations of birds changing with the passing of the seasons.
- 11 Catawba Greenway and Whispering Pines 9:00 am. Leaders: Kirk Gardner (828-216-9170) and Kent Davis (828-216-9170).**
Join Kirk and Kent at The Catawba Greenway Trailhead which is located at 5061 Catawba Creek Road.
- 13 RVBC Membership Meeting, Monday 7:00 pm.** Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018.
Featured Program: Puffin Conservation, Presenter, Dr. Stephen Kress. Dr. Kress of Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology returns to give us updates on the projects with which he is involved relating to the re-establishment of colonies of Atlantic Puffins along the Northeast coast of the US.
- 18 Pond Hopping in Botetourt County 9:00 am. Leaders: Tim and Alyce Quinn (540-537-1831)** Alyce and Tim will guide us to several areas featuring ponds that can provide refuge for wintering water birds, ducks, and geese.
- 25 Wild Card Trip–TBA Leader: Barry Whitt (540-309-4353).** Barry has plans that are totally dependent upon climactic conditions; however, stay tuned! If he sees favorable weather, he'll send out an announcement.

November Highlights

Meeting Notes

Monday, November 4, Featured Program: "Cuba – A Birding Paradise" With 42 people in attendance, Kathy and George Clemo gave insight into the fascinating world of birding in Cuba through magnificent photos of the colorful, exotic birds in this rarely seen up-close area. A highlight was the introduction to the historical Bay of Pigs. **Linda Cory** sold and distributed the club's outstanding 2025 calendars, and will continue to do so into the New Year.

The annual election was held, members voted in the slate of 2025 Board of Directors to take office on January 1, 2025, as presented by the 2024 Nominating Committee consisting of **Robin Austin, Betty Burke, and Maxine Fraade**. They are as follows:

Officers:

President: Drew Daniels
Vice President of Programs: David Frye
Vice President of Membership: Mary Harshfield
Treasurer: Carol Whitt
Secretary: Karen Frye

Directors:

Nathan Anderson, Robin Austin,
Mary Lou Barrett, Betty Burke,
Linda Cory, Kent Davis,
Maxine Fraade, Sissy Logan

Field Trip Reports

Saturday, November 2, Ellett Farm Property with leaders Sissy Logan and Bill Hunley

A glorious fall morning was enjoyed by thirteen birders on the Ellett property located along Brandon Avenue near Brandon Oaks Senior Living. It is a beautiful tract of land with mixed habitat. Many thanks to Bill Hunley for leading the way. We saw a total of 37 species, the birds were very active, and there were lots of them. The bird of the day – bluebirds, everywhere! **Katherine Clemo, Photographer**



Saturday, November 9, Tinker Creek Greenway with leaders Sid and Mary Lou Barritt

Thirteen birders walked along Tinker Creek to the Roanoke River on a beautiful fall morning. We saw more Cedar Waxwings than we could count and Purple Finches, always a treat! There were 33 species total.

Mary Lou Barritt, Photographer

(Left) Cedar Waxwings, (Right) Purple Finch female



Wednesday, November 13, Greenfield Lake at Botetourt Center with leader Annie Downing

A handful of birders experienced the changing seasons and the arrival of winter birds at Greenfield Lake. The Wednesday morning walk netted 38 species. A variety of ducks and grebes were seen, and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Dark-eyed Juncos have arrived. Other highlights from this visit included Belted Kingfisher, Hermit Thrush, Great Blue Heron, Cedar Waxwing, and plenty of Eastern Bluebirds.

Mary Harshfield, Photographer



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 Peek" photos and order form are on our website. The calendars may be ordered or purchased in three convenient ways:



2025 Cover photo

1. **In person** at the RVBC meeting on December 9. There will be a "pick up day" at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs facility on 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.

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



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Carolina Chickadee



House Wren



Carolina Wren



Tufted Titmouse





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

Happy Holidays



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:
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Roanoke, VA 24018

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