

Roanoke Valley Bird Club



Celebrating
68 Years of Birding
1957-2025

Next Meeting:
May 12, 7:00 pm
Roanoke Council of
Garden Clubs

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

RVBC NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025



PHOTOGRAPHER
GARLAND KITTS

DREW'S BIRD OF THE MONTH **GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER** *Myiarchus crinitus*

A large, assertive flycatcher with rich reddish-brown accents and a lemon-yellow belly, the Great Crested Flycatcher is a common bird of Eastern woodlands. Its habit of hunting high in the canopy means it's not particularly conspicuous—until you learn its very distinctive call, an emphatic rising whistle. These flycatchers swoop after flying insects and may crash into foliage in pursuit of leaf-crawling prey. They are the only Eastern flycatchers that nest in cavities, and this means they sometimes make use of nest boxes.

(More on page 3.)

~ The Cornell Lab



Next meeting:

**MONDAY, MAY 12
7:00 PM**

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

Featured program:

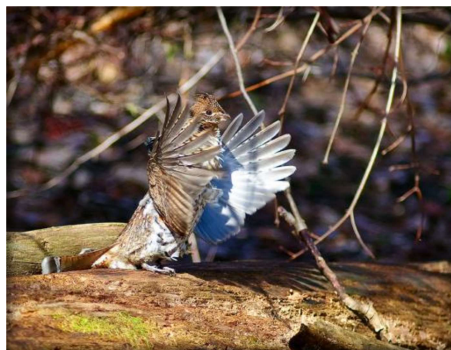
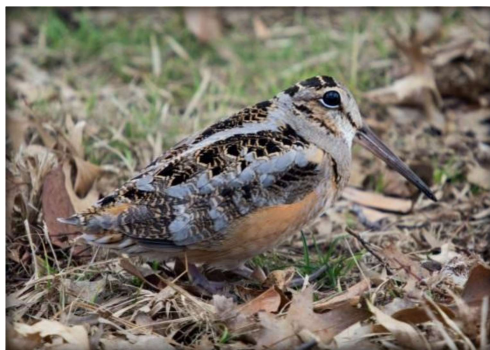
**RUFFED GROUSE AND AMERICAN WOODCOCK
CONSERVATION EFFORTS**

SPEAKERS: SEAN BARRY AND SARA CERV

This month's program will acquaint us with an organization that undertakes significant conservation efforts aimed at protecting and developing enhanced new habitat for wildlife—specifically Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock. Representatives from the Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society, Sean Barry and Sara Cerv, will highlight their group's work with landowners and government agencies to develop critical wildlife habitat utilizing scientific management practices.

Sean Barry is the Forest Conservation Director for the RGS & AWS in the Southern Appalachian region. Sean oversees a dynamic portfolio of conservation projects, including landscape-scale partnerships with federal and state agencies, private landowners, and other conservation nonprofit organizations. Sean holds a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University and a master's degree in environmental policy and management with a concentration in natural resource management from the University of Denver.

Sara Cerv is the Forest Conservation Director for the RGS & AWS for the Coastal Plain and Piedmont Region. She leads large-scale forest management projects, collaborating with local communities and helping build lasting solutions that address challenges like habitat fragmentation and forest diversification. Originally from Christiansburg, Virginia, Sara earned her Master of Forestry and a certification in Geospatial Information Technologies from Virginia Tech in 2021.



Reminder: Please consider bringing a snack to share and/or something for the drawing.

This is our last meeting and newsletter until September.

Although, we may still receive occasional email notifications and reminders.

Have a nice summer!

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.

Photography is provided by membership.

Photos and articles are gladly accepted for publication as room allows, and may be sent electronically in JPEG or word docx..

Thank you!

Carol Whiteside

Newsletter Editor

540.774.2143

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President's Musings

President Drew Daniels
ddaniels2627@cox.net
540.314.6069

As a member have you ever thought,
"What do I want from my Bird Club?"

Do you want

- 1- Active monthly meetings with informative speakers and socialization with other members?
- 2- Frequent birding field trips to local hotspots with knowledgeable leaders who can help you identify birds?
- 3- An interactive website that has answers to any question you may have about birding?
- 4- An annual calendar with photos taken by members of the club?
- 5- A group of educational speakers who present to schools, civic clubs, and other groups all the benefits of birds for the environment?
- 6- Displays at local festivals, manned by members, to interest the local populous about birds and invite them to join?
- 7- A monthly newsletter with all the activities of the club, pertinent articles, and upcoming bird walks?

Having said this, are there other things you want from your club? Remember this is **Your** Club! Email me and let me know what else you would like from your club. I will answer each suggestion!



Garland Kitts, Photographer of both Great Crested Flycatchers

DREW'S BIRD OF THE MONTH *Great Crested Flycatcher* *Myiarchus crinitus*

"Preface: The Great Crested Flycatcher is a cavity nester and will use a bird box with a 2-inch hole. Every nest I have ever seen has a shed snake skin in it.

Status: Fairly common spring and fall transient and summer resident."

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



The Great Crested Flycatcher is a bird of the tree tops. It spends very little time on the ground, and does not hop or walk. It prefers to fly from place to place on the ground rather than walk.

These birds live along the edges between habitats; they don't need big stretches of unbroken forest canopy to thrive. That means that logging and development practices that increase forest fragmentation actually work to their advantage, in sharp contrast to birds that dwell deep in the forest.

They weave shed snakeskin into their nest. Where it's readily available, as in Florida, nearly every nest contains snakeskin. They also seem to look for flimsy, crinkly nest materials—they've also used onion skins, cellophane, or plastic wrappers.

Nestlings rarely return to breed near where they were born. But once yearlings have chosen a breeding area, they often return to that same area year after year. Some pairs re-establish their bond from the previous season and may even reuse the same nesting cavity.

Though they're flycatchers, these birds also eat a fair amount of fruit. Instead of picking at the flesh of small fruit, Great Crested Flycatchers swallow the fruit whole and regurgitate the pits, sometimes several at a time.

When the male sings, it's to be heard, not to see or be seen. He picks a singing perch within the canopy, well away from branch ends. In contrast, hunting perches require an unobstructed view of potential prey and unobstructed flight paths to them, whether the prey is in the air or on leaves or twigs. Both sexes favor hunting from dead branches with a backdrop of foliage for cover.

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

MAY 2025

- 03 **Big Spring Day 2025, Saturday, Coordinator: Barry Kinzie (540-580-0059)** Join the effort to count as many of our area birds as possible from Saturday morning through early afternoon. There are specific territories that need to be surveyed, and our coordinator Barry Kinzie can use all of the volunteers that he can enlist to cover them. Please contact Barry if you're interested in getting involved and having fun!
- 10 **Tinker Creek Lane, Saturday 8:00 am. Leader: Sissy Logan (540-353-4500)** Sissy takes us for a birding hike in a beautiful tract (private property with access authorized by a friend of RVBC) just north of the Tinker Creek. The property is a mix of habitats with large open fields, wooded areas, fence rows, and areas near the creek. Expect spring migrants as well as waterfowl that may be present near the creek. **Directions:** Travel route 460 and turn onto northbound Plantation Road, then turn right onto Hollins Road eastbound. Turn left onto Old Mountain Road and immediately turn right once you cross the creek onto Tinker Creek Lane. The property is at the very end of the lane.
- 12 **May Membership Meeting, Monday 7:00pm.** Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018. See page 2. **Program topic: Conservation Efforts Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock Society– Speakers: Sean Barry and Sara Cerv.**
- 14 **Second Wednesday Bird Walk, Greenfield 8:00am. Leader: Bill Hunley (540-467-3477)** Join us for a Wednesday morning bird walk on the Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield. We will walk around Greenfield Lake and possibly to the pond beyond. It 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 onto International Parkway and the Greenfield Education and Training Center, across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation. Park in the second lot on right.
- 17 **Mill Mountain Park on Mill Mountain, Roanoke, 8:00 am. Leader: Linda Cory (540-580-5214)** Join leader, Linda Cory for a morning bird walk at the top of Mill Mountain. The park at the peak of the mountain is a beautiful horticultural and avian spot especially in spring. **Directions:** From Jefferson Street in Roanoke City turn onto Southeast bound Walnut Street and follow it as it turns into the parkway circling up to the top of Mill Mountain, turning right at the intersection of Mill Mountain Spur (at the Big 'Ol Bikes sculpture). Park in the lot adjacent to the Discovery Center to meet up with the group.
- 24 **Green Hill Park, Salem, Saturday 7:00 am** (Note: specific start time.) **Leader: Kent Skaggs (308-627-5414)** Kent Skaggs will lead us on an early morning hike along the paths of Green Hill Park. The park borders the Roanoke River and incorporates wooded habitat around its periphery. **Directions:** From West Main Street, Salem, turn left at Diuguids Road. In less than ½ mile, cross over the Roanoke River, and turn right onto Green Hill Park Road. Park in the first parking lot on right.
- 31 **Jae Valley Park Bird Hike, Saturday 8:00 am. Leaders: Kent Davis (540-355-6388) and Kirk Gardner (828-216-9170)** Join us for a trip to a park area that's under-birded yet very productive. Our Leaders, Kent and Kirk, frequently have birds flocking to them, so don't miss this one! **Directions:** From Roanoke SW take Walnut Ave eastbound across the bridge (across I-581, the railroad, and the Roanoke River) turning left on Piedmont Rd. After one block, turn right onto Riverland Road SE and follow this route southeast until you reach the junction with Bennington Street. Stay to the right and the route turns into Mount Pleasant Boulevard and heads further southeast. This road (Route 116) goes straight and becomes Jae Valley Rd which gets you to the park entrance. Turn right into Jae Valley Park.

SUMMER BREAK

THIS IS THE LAST NEWSLETTER AND MEETING UNTIL SEPTEMBER

JULY 19, 2025

Annual Roanoke Valley Bird Club and Blue Ridge Wildflower Society Picnic. Saturday, 5:00PM. RSVP by Friday, July 11, to Carol Whiteside whitesidemules@yahoo.com or 540.774.2143. Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs facility. Please bring a side dish or dessert. See details on page 5.

AUGUST 2025 (date TBC, watch for a specific notice in your email)

Butterflies at Greenfield. Leader: Toni Pepin (571-246-2598)

Toni will take us to our favorite viewing grounds—Greenfield Lake, but this time focusing on beautiful butterflies! So, dial those binoculars for close-in viewing and enjoy this summertime walk. The Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield is mostly paved and a flat and even walking track.

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 on International Parkway, across from the entrance to Ashley Plantation. Park in the second lot on right.

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and Roanoke Valley Bird Club

Cordially invite you to the

Annual Picnic

Saturday, JULY 19, 2025, 5:00 PM

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs inside facility

3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018



- Please bring a side dish or dessert to share including the serving utensil, and a card with your name and food title or recipe (for allergy inquiries)
- The RVBC will provide fried chicken and the BRWS will provide barbecue
- Drinks and ice are provided, or you may bring your favorite beverage

Schedule:

- 4:00 PM Set-up
- 5:00 PM Social gathering
- 5:30 PM Welcome and picnic dining

Please RSVP by Friday, July 11, to:

Carol Whiteside

540-774-2143 or

whitesidemules@yahoo.com

With the number in your party attending

See you then and there!



54TH BIG SPRING DAY

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2025 (TIME VARIES)

The 54th annual count is this coming Saturday, May 3rd!

This fun and historic citizen science tradition is a count conducted jointly by the Roanoke Valley Bird Club and the Lynchburg Bird Club. The first Big Spring Day count occurred in 1971 and 102 species were found. Last year, a total of 126 species were observed.

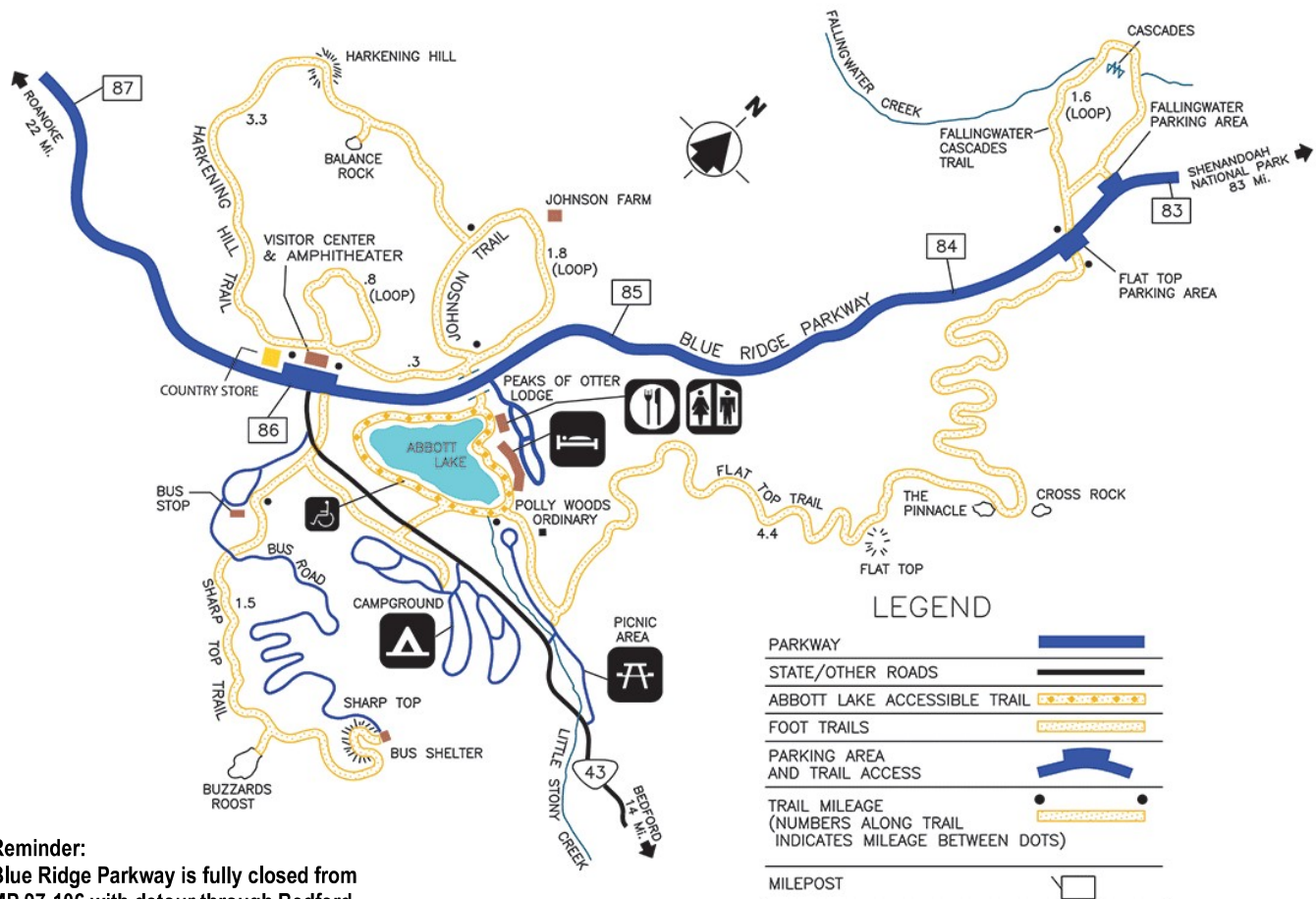
Sixteen groups of birders will cover designated areas within 7.5 miles of the Big Spring in the Peaks of Otter Picnic Area. Each of the sixteen groups will independently choose their starting time, and rain-or-shine continues as long into the day as they desire. As per tradition, a mid-day tally will be held for those interested in sharing the day's findings, and having a chance to chat with fellow enthusiastic birders. This year's tally will be held between 12:30 and 1:30 PM in the amphitheater behind the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center. Restrooms are available, and snacks and cold beverages will be provided.

Never birded on Big Spring Day, or haven't been able to participate in the last few years? Newcomers and birders returning to the volunteer flock are always encouraged and warmly welcomed. Please contact Barry at peckerridge@lumos.net or 540-580-0059, he will match you up with a route or an existing team looking for additional eyes.

Special Note to Big Spring Day group leaders: If you are using eBird mobile in the field, please also share the list(s) with eBird user *bigspringday* before you submit, and the list will go straight into the compiled report. If you don't share in the field, due to an eBird quirk, you can't later share via the app. Instead, you will need to share via the eBird website. Access the eBird.org website on your computer or phone, open the checklist(s), and at right of screen click on blue Checklist Tools, select Share w/ others in your party, then at left in white box type *bigspringday* and then click green Share Checklist below. You should get a message "Yay! This checklist has been shared."

Submitted by Barry Kinzie, Roanoke Coordinator

Peaks of Otter



Reminder:

Blue Ridge Parkway is fully closed from MP 97-106 with detour through Bedford.

April Highlights

Meeting Notes

Monday, April 14,

Secretary Karen Frye noted: "There were 52 members and guests in attendance. **Dave Frye** presented the April Program "Merlin and eBird 101" as a tutorial of what these two apps have to offer, and a beginner's primer on how to use them. Group discussion and audience hints were provided.

Field Trip Reports

Saturday, April 5, Go Green for Grandin Festival

The Roanoke Valley Bird Club had a booth at the First Annual Go Green Festival at The Raleigh Court Library. Our booth was manned by Mary Harshfield, Marc Arrington, and Drew Daniels. We had a lot of people drop by to talk birds and find out when our next meeting will be. Several people who were new to the area stopped by to find out what we do and how to join up, very encouraging. There were lots of young families who brought their children by to see the Backyard Birds poster, and identify what birds they had in their yards. It was a successful day.



Wednesday, April 9, Mid-Week Wednesday Bird Walk at Oak Grove Park. Leader Drew Daniels.

After the preceding week of temperatures in the upper 70's to low 80's, we started out with temps in the low 40's, and 10 hardy souls came to bird, and bird we did. We totaled 28 species with some notables: a Winter Wren, Northern House Wren, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hermit Thrush and a plethora of White-Throated Sparrows. The trail was excellent and has been extended making easy access to the birds. It was certainly worth a visit.



Saturday, April 12, Vineyard Park Bird Walk in Vinton

Leaders Kent Davis and Drew Daniels. Nine bundled-up birders braved the early morning temperatures, a constant breeze, and slowly clearing skies at Vineyard Park in Vinton. After a healthy walk along the creek and around the soccer fields, we identified 40 species. Included in our finds were several Warbler species - Yellow-rump, Palm, and Common Yellowthroats. Being just across the tracks from the Great Blue Heron Rookery, we saw 8 Great Blue Herons; some were carrying sticks for their nests. We saw a Northern Flicker and Downy, Hairy, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. In addition, we saw Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Tree Swallows, and White-bellied Nuthatches. A very rewarding day, but we were glad to get in our cars to warm up!



Photos by Drew Daniels



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

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

RVBC NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025

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