

# Roanoke Valley Bird Club

Celebrating

69 Years of Birding

1957-2026

“LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS”



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

[www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com](http://www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com)

RVBC NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

PHOTOGRAPHER  
**KENT DAVIS**



## DREW'S BIRD OF THE MONTH **DARK-EYED JUNCO** *Junco hyemalis*

Dark-eyed Juncos are neat, even flashy little sparrows that flit about forest floors of the western mountains and Canada, then flood the rest of North America for winter. They're easy to recognize by their crisp (though extremely variable) markings and the bright white tail feathers they habitually flash in flight. Dark-eyed Juncos are among the most abundant forest birds of North America. Look for them on woodland walks as well as in flocks at your feeders or on the ground beneath them.

(More on page 3.)

~The Cornell Lab



## WELCOME NEW MEMBER!

*Natasha Fuller*

*Next meeting:*

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

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

*Featured program:*

**BIRDS OF THE WORLD  
PRESENTED BY WILLIAM YOUNG**



**B**irds of the World will showcase some of the beautiful and unusual birds Bill Young has seen and photographed during his travels. He will highlight birds from the bottom of the world in Antarctica to above 14,000 feet in the Andes to those he has seen near his home.

Bill is a writer and naturalist who lives in Kensington, Maryland. He has birded on all seven continents, and is especially interested in bird behavior. His book, *The Fascination of Birds: From the Albatross to the Yellowthroat* was published by Dover Publications in 2014. It explores the connections between birds and a broad range of subjects, such as biology, ecology, literature, music, history, politics, economics, religion, geography, physics, chemistry, linguistics, the visual arts, the performing arts, sports, and comedy. Bill also makes videos about natural history, and his YouTube channel has had more than 1.25 million views.

In 2018, Bill and Ashley Bradford created the MPNature.com website, which contains a wealth of information about both the natural history of Monticello Park in Alexandria, Virginia, and many other natural history subjects. He regularly gives talks and teaches classes and courses about birds and other natural history subjects. In January, he will teach a class to two different groups about the effects of climate breakdown on birds.

*Pictured above: Gray Crowned Cranes, King Penguin, William Young*

Hello,

Does anyone have any suggestions on what I could do with many issues of Cornell's *Living Bird Magazine*? They are nice publications and I hate to just throw them in the trash.

**Joan McKiever** mckiever1@verizon.net

## CONTACT US!



### ROANOKE VALLEY BIRD CLUB

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ROANOKE, VIRGINIA 24018  
NONPROFIT 501(C)(3)

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[www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com](http://www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com)

#### 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS:

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*Vice President, programs*

**David Frye**

*Vice President, memberships*

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*Field Trips* **David Frye**

*Meeting Refreshments* **Mary Lou Barritt**

*Newsletter Editor* **Carol Whiteside**

*RVBC/BRWS Annual Picnic* **Carol Whiteside**

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*Webmaster* **Andrea Boone**

The RVBC Newsletter is published monthly **September through May** with the deadline for each issue on the **20<sup>th</sup> of the month** prior to that publication. Since the newsletter is in pdf, links are not active and should be copy/paste into your browser. **Photography is provided by membership with member names in bold type.** 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**

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# President's Musings

President Drew Daniels  
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540.314.6069

When you read this, Times Square will be back to normal, the champagne bottles empty, the confetti cleaned up, and the New Year will be about a week old! I knew I had to come up with a thought-provoking musing that everyone would find very interesting. Since I have been reading about these large data centers establishing around the country, I decided to expound on this great area, and it's important enough to carry on for many months! Google purchased 312 acres at Botetourt Center at Greenfield for \$14.06M, and pledges \$4M over five years for local community projects. I was glad to hear about the transparency in the project. Google has discussed their electricity needs with APCO, their water needs with the Western Virginia Water Authority, the actual site location in the Botetourt Center at Greenfield industrial park, and not in the scenic areas in the northern and eastern parts of the county. I haven't heard much discussion about the noise and light pollution that will most certainly affect our bees, wildlife, and most critically, our birds! Greenfield Lake with 245 all-time species is one of Botetourt's best "hotspots" for birds; not only in migration, but also year-round. Many of our local species nest there and can be found every time we take a bird walk around the lake.

I thought it was a good time to read about the noise and light pollution, and how it has affected the bees, wildlife, and birds in the areas close to the data centers already in use. I read many studies that have been done around the globe in the last five years and found some disturbing facts. Several of the studies were done using the areas around data centers and their conclusions were concerning.

The bee population was found to have trouble communicating food locations with other bees, and there were times that the bees were almost in a trance for many minutes at a time - not good for local orchards with apple and peach crops to pollinate. They found that sound and light pollution around data centers:

- cause birds to alter their migration patterns
- made it harder for them to find food
- made it difficult to find a mate and nest
- cause birds to raise smaller clutches
- made communication with other birds harder

Now let's put this in perspective - a data center located right next door to Greenfield Lake, where we have observed 245 bird species, will be a great place to study the effects of light and noise pollution from the data center on the migrating birds as well as the local permanent species. Will the migrating species stop visiting and resting at Greenfield Lake and leave the area altogether? Will the local species move on because of the noise and light pollution; thus, making Greenfield Lake a "Dead Zone"? This is something our Bird Club needs to study and monitor closely as this data center ramps up. We will have the current data from eBird after the data center goes online, as well as data from years before to compare.

Could it be the end of Greenfield Lake as a local birding "hotspot"?

## Happy New Year!

### DREW'S BIRD OF THE MONTH

#### Dark-eyed Junco

*Junco hyemalis*

**"Preface:** They are almost always in a flock and in some winters they are abundant. People in the country call them snow birds because they come to the barns and houses when it snows.

**Status:** Common spring and fall transient and winter resident."

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



Carol Whiteside, Photographer

Dark-eyed Juncos breed in forests across much of North America and at elevations ranging from sea level to more than 11,000 feet. They are often found in coniferous forests including pine, Douglas-fir, spruce, and fir, but also in deciduous forests such as aspen, cottonwood, oak, maple, and hickory. During winter and on migration they use a wider variety of habitats including open woodlands, fields, roadsides, parks, and gardens.

Dark-eyed Juncos are primarily seed-eaters, with seeds of chickweed, buckwheat, lamb's quarters, sorrel, and the like making up about 75% of their year-round diet. At feeders they seem to prefer millet over sunflower seeds. During the breeding season, Dark-eyed Juncos also eat insects including beetles, moths, butterflies, caterpillars, ants, wasps, and flies.

When foraging, Dark-eyed Juncos typically hop (rather than walk) on the ground, pecking or scratching at the leaf litter, or flit very low in underbrush gleaning food from twigs and leaves.

The female chooses the nest site, typically in a depression or niche on sloping ground, rock face, or amid the tangled roots of an upturned tree. Around people, juncos may nest in or underneath buildings. Occasionally, juncos nest above the ground on horizontal branches (rarely as high as 45 feet), window ledges, and in hanging flower pots or light fixtures.

During winter, Dark-eyed Juncos form fairly large flocks, and where wintering ranges overlap you may find several subspecies in a single flock. Juncos also forage with other sparrows and bluebirds.

~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**



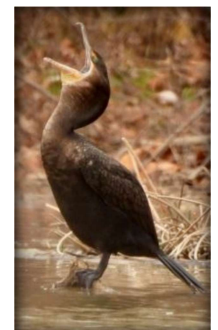
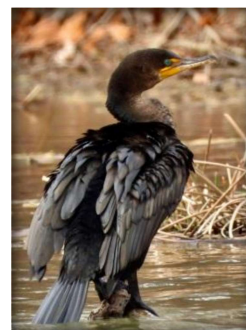
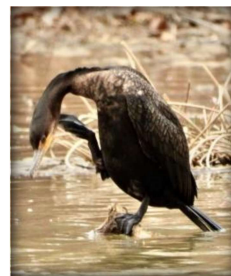
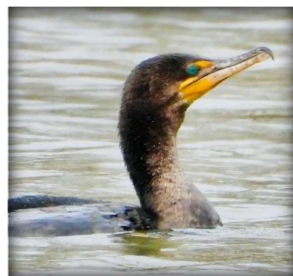
*Note: if inclement weather necessitates a cancellation, an e-mail notification will be sent out. You may also call or text the leader. Please do not call any of the trip leaders after 8 pm the night before the field trip, in consideration of having to get up early the next day to lead the field trip.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

## JANUARY 2026

- 01 New Year's Day Birding.** Everyone is encouraged to start the New Year off right and GO BIRDING!
- 10 Catawba Greenway and Whispering Pines, Saturday 9:00am, Leader: Kirk Gardner (828-216-9170)**  
This Saturday trip will involve about a mile of walking on a mostly gravel road as well as small portions of some grassy fields. An option after the walk at Catawba (if time and weather permit) will be to visit nearby Whispering Pines where we have seen some interesting birds in past years. Waterproof shoes are recommended.  
**Directions:** Take Rte. 311 toward Catawba 6.7 miles. Turn right onto Rte. 779 (Catawba Creek Road) and drive a half mile to the Catawba Sustainability Center. The group will meet in the parking lot.
- 12 Membership Meeting, Monday 7:00pm** Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018.  
Program: **Birds of the World presented by William Young.** (Details on page 2.)
- 14 Second Wednesday Bird Hike at Garst Mill Park 9:00am, Leader: Dave Frye (248-459-6783)**  
Join us for a mid-January Wednesday bird walk at a local park in Cave Spring. Garst Mill Park flanks Mud Lick Creek and is an easy paved path with interesting bird life. Listen closely and you may hear an Eastern Screech Owl quavering.  
**Directions:** From Brambleton Avenue in Cave Spring turn onto Garst Mill Road SW and head NNW. After almost ½ mile, turn onto WB Halevan Road. The entrance road is the very first left turn off of Halevan Road.
- 31 Pond Hopping in Botetourt County, Saturday 9:00am, Leaders: Alyce and Tim Quinn (540-537-1831).**  
Join Alyce and Tim at Greenfield Lake to begin this multi-destination trip. We will spend the morning visiting local ponds in search of wintering waterfowl and other avian life. Bring your scope if you have one. If we have iffy weather or road conditions we may cancel, so call if you have any doubts.  
**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 2026 A QUICK LOOK AHEAD

- 6-8 Virginia Society of Ornithology, Trip to Outer Banks, NC, [www.virginiabirds.org](http://www.virginiabirds.org)**
- 11 Second Wednesday Hike at Greenfield, 9:00am, Leader: David Frye (248-459-6783)**
- 14 RVBC Annual Raptor Count,** the form and more details will be in the February newsletter
- 21 Bird Hike at Walrond Park, Saturday 9:00am, Leader: David Frye (248-459-6783)**



Double-crested Cormorant at Greenfield Lake on November 15, 2025, **Karen Bolton**, Photographer. Karen noted, "I love his feet and brilliant green eyes!"

# December Highlights

**December Meeting Notes** The December 8 meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.

## December Field Trip Reports

**December 10, Leader: David Frye.** A very chilly morning with new snow made the walk surrounding Greenfield Lake a winter wonderland. The tally for the morning was 28 species observed. Partially open water drew many species to the lake, and 9 species were water birds. The highlights were 15 beautiful Hooded Mergansers, 3 Wilson's Snipes, and a Great Egret (isn't it about time you flew south?)

**December 20, Roanoke City Christmas Bird Count ►  
Sewage Treatment Plant: Roger Medina, Dick Grubb,  
Kent Davis, Barry Whitt, and Kirk Gardner.**

**December 28, 9:00 AM - 11:20 AM eBird Report  
Roanoke Sewage Treatment Plant  
Roanoke City, Virginia, US  
Protocol: Traveling 1.286 miles  
RVBC Field Trip lead by Kent Davis, Photographer  
30 species 8 people**

Canada Goose 2  
Mallard 28  
**Green-winged Teal 1**  
Red Junglefowl (Domestic type) 1  
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 19  
Mourning Dove 1  
Killdeer 7 ►  
**Wilson's Snipe 1**  
Ring-billed Gull 16 ►  
Black Vulture 4  
Turkey Vulture 3  
Cooper's Hawk 1  
Belted Kingfisher 2  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 1  
Red-bellied Woodpecker 3  
Pileated Woodpecker 1  
**Eastern Phoebe 1**  
Blue Jay 3  
American Crow 9  
Tufted Titmouse 1  
Carolina Wren 6  
European Starling 42  
Northern Mockingbird 2  
Eastern Bluebird 6  
American Robin 1  
Dark-eyed Junco 14  
White-throated Sparrow 10  
Song Sparrow 8  
**Swamp Sparrow 1**  
Northern Cardinal 5



Killdeer ▲ Ring-billed Gull ▼  
Kent Davis, Photographer





**Virginia Bird Atlas - The distribution of breeding birds across Virginia**

The Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas is now live!

The Atlas offers insights into bird species breeding in the Commonwealth and related information.

The Atlas website is being released in two phases. The initial phase, on-line now, includes:

- **Species Accounts** for the 203 species found breeding in Virginia are the centerpiece of the website.
- **Interpreting Species Accounts** gives detailed explanations to aid in understanding the maps, figures, and other information presented for each species.
- **Atlas Methods** explains how the atlas data were collected.
- **Results** providing insights into species no longer breeding in Virginia since the first Atlas conducted in the late 1980s, as well as the exciting discoveries of species now breeding here that were not during the first Atlas period.
- **Acknowledgments** lists the individuals and organizations who contributed to the Atlas project, including field volunteers and staff who contributed to the massive Atlas dataset, photographers whose images enhance the website, generous financial donors who made the website's creation possible, and so many other contributions.

**Stay tuned!** In early 2026, the second phase of the Atlas release will provide the analytical methodology, additional results, summary statistics on survey effort and block coverage, information on Virginia's geographical features and habitats, and the potential role of the Atlas in bird conservation.

We invite you to visit the Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas and let us know what you think using the Contact Us page.

**Thanks to all VSO members** for contributing to the Atlas! We could not have done it without you.

VIRGINIA SOCIETY OF ORNITHOLOGY



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

# Happy New Year

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

RVBC NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026



## Roanoke Valley Bird Club

### Membership Application/Renewal Form

Memberships expire on August 31, each year

2026

Please print

(Current Year)

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