

# Roanoke Valley Bird Club

Next Meeting:  
May 11, 7:00 pm  
Roanoke Council of  
Garden Clubs facility

Celebrating  
69 Years of Birding

1957-2026

“LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS”



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

RVBC NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026



PHOTOGRAPHER  
ED KYLE

## DREW'S BIRD OF THE MONTH CAPE MAY WARBLER *Setophaga tigrina*

Among the dazzling cohort of spring warblers, the first Cape May Warbler to arrive is a balm: its mossy green back, tiger-striped breast, and chestnut cheek patch make it unlike any other warbler. During the breeding season, the species lives remote from most human observers, in northern spruce-fir forests, where its nesting success is tied to its chief food, the spruce budworm caterpillar. These unusual warblers have specially shaped tongues that allow them to sip nectar from tropical flowers in winter—and sometimes from hummingbird feeders. (More on page 3.)

~The Cornell Lab



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

*Shannon Mazurowski  
Sydney Nicholas  
Bill Carper & Family*

*Kathy DuPont  
Hillarie Collins*

*Next meeting:*

**MONDAY, MAY 11  
7:00 PM**

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

*Featured program:*

## CLUB MEMBERS' SHARING NIGHT

*This program is held annually in December and was postponed at that time due to the meeting cancelation because of inclement weather..*

Please bring your favorite photos, videos, and stories of birding adventures, and a snack to share. If you have a digital presentation, email President Drew Daniels with your estimated time to reserve your space, and then bring it on a flash drive so we can run it for you. Feel free to share a birding story or an exciting item to show the club. You are encouraged to bring finger-food to share (healthy or a dessert). There will also be an extensive gift drawing. This will be a fun evening of sharing our love of birds and wildlife while enjoying delicious snacks! Email: ddaniels2627@cox.net

*This will be our last meeting and newsletter before summer break. See you in September!*

Summer Events:

7/18 RVBC/BRWS PICNIC

8/1 Austin's Hummingbird Celebration

8/22 Summer Butterfly Walk



Glenn Stafford, Photographer

## CONTACT US!



## ROANOKE VALLEY BIRD CLUB

P.O. Box 20405  
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA 24018  
NONPROFIT 501(C)(3)

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

### 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS:

*President*

**Drew Daniels**

*Vice President, programs*

**David Frye**

*Vice President, memberships*

**Mary Harshfield**

*Secretary*

**Karen Frye**

*Treasurer*

**Carol Whitt**

### DIRECTORS:

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

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN:

*Bluebird Trails* **Carol Whiteside**

*Field Trips* **David Frye**

*Meeting Refreshments* **Mary Lou Barritt**

*Newsletter Editor* **Carol Whiteside**

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

*Web Manager:* **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**

540.774.2143

whitesidemules@yahoo.com



# President's Musings

President Drew Daniels  
ddaniels2627@cox.net  
540.314.6069

Have you ever wondered what has brought about the explosion in birding? I think back before the baby boomers all retired, it was the die-hard birders who were the nucleus of the birding community. During the last third of the twentieth century, these birders were banding together to form bird clubs around the country. That's where the push came to get the word out about birding to groups, schools, etc. The race was on! The baby boomers retired and wanted something they could do with their spare time, a hobby. Turns out birding was a perfect release to get out of the house for exercise, being one with nature, socializing with like-minded individuals, and learning a new hobby - birding!

Then, along came Covid - stuck in the house, can't go to work, have to work from home, and can't socialize - the epitome of cabin fever! Statistics from studies done in 2016 show 46.7 million people identified as birders. The Covid lockdowns in 2020 served as a major catalyst for birding. People found a hobby that would let them escape cabin fever, provide a boost for their mental health, and give them a connection to nature.

In the 2022 study, the number of people identifying as birders rose to a whopping 96 million people. The study showed that, of the 96 million birders, 43 million traveled on birding trips away from home. This contributed to a total economic output of \$279 billion (that's billion with a "B") and supported 1.4 million jobs. These are some impressive figures - all for a hobby, birding! The fastest growing demographic in the study was young birdwatchers going from 1 million in 2016 to 3.2 million in 2022!

Stop and think about what has caused this mega-increase in birders. Let's look at modern technology being a prevailing driver. With the innovations in photography, primarily videography, and smaller cameras capable of being installed above nests or in nest boxes bringing the bird's life into our homes in real-time. You can now watch eagle cams, hawk cams, and owl cams transmitting from anywhere in the world. You can even watch bird cams from your birdhouse right outside your window. There are feeder cams you can watch when it's too cold to get out. There are wetland cams and pond cams, where again, you can watch the minute-by-minute activity. All of this can be viewed on your phone, tablet, computer, and even on your TV with YouTube.

With the numerous birding apps like eBird you can record your trips and the birds you identify, and with Merlin you can identify birds by their calls or photo. All this is available on your phone, right in the palm of your hand.

There is no doubt about it; Covid and modern technology have brought birding into the 21st century. Now we must put a greater emphasis on being good stewards of the environment and prevent the heavy losses being incurred in the bird population. Otherwise, we will face species extinction in our lifetime. We all must speak up and do our part to prevent this from happening!



Ed Kile, Photographer (Cape May Warbler, male)

## DREW'S BIRD OF THE MONTH CAPE MAY WARBLER

*Setophaga tigrina*

"Status: Uncommon spring and common fall transient."  
~Barry Kinzie's *Birds and Birding of the Roanoke Valley*



Kent Davis, Photographer (male)

Cape May Warblers breed in [Canadian] forests of spruce and balsam fir, especially in areas where spruce budworms are abundant. Although red, black, and white spruce habitats are all acceptable, these warblers nest only in relatively mature forests, about 25–75 years old (trees usually over 35 feet tall). During migration, they turn up in just about any woods, scrub, or even thicket. Look for them toward the edges, where insects and their larvae are most abundant. Wintering birds in the Bahamas and Greater Antilles also use a great variety of habitats and may be most numerous in shrubby gardens, coffee plantations, and parks, though they can also be found in xeric (dry) forest, scrub, pine forest, broadleaf forest, mangroves, and second-growth of many kinds.

Very few people have reported observing courtship in Cape May Warblers. Ornithologist James Bond reported in 1937 seeing a male flying "with rigid wings" above a female as she was building the nest. Like other warblers, male Cape Mays are territorial during the breeding season and will chase rival males from the territory, which is about an acre in size, a bit larger when spruce budworm is scarce. Males guard females as they build the nest but do not assist them; females incubate the 6-9 eggs, which is greater than that of other warblers. Both parents feed their young; they have just one brood a year. Adults and young remain in the nesting area for several weeks before migration, sometimes joining mixed-species flocks of woodland birds. Wintering birds are territorial in some but apparently not all habitats and migrants may defend resources in some contexts, with males especially confronting each other by racing at each other with raised tails and drooped wings.  
~The Cornell Lab



Garland Kitts, Photographer (Cape May Warbler, female)



# 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. 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 2026

- 1-3 VSO Summer Field Trip, NRV Blacksburg. Organizer: Meredith Bell (804) 824-4958** or [www.virginiabirds.org/vso-events/nrv-2026](http://www.virginiabirds.org/vso-events/nrv-2026)) This trip is now fully booked, only last-second cancellation/fill-in spots may remain.
- 9 Big Spring Day Birding Event, Saturday 8:00am through early afternoon. Organizer/Compiler: Toni Pepin (571-246-2598)**  
An annual birding event to count as many bird species as possible during this one day. Groups with established territories will report their findings to Toni through eBird (sharing their eBird checklists with "bigspringday"). Contact Toni if you'd like to join a team for this fun event!
- 11 Membership Meeting, Monday 7:00pm.** Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018.  
Program: **Members' Photo Sharing Night by Club photographers.** Drew will hand the podium and the big screen over to any of our club's fine photographers that wish to share some of their best birding memories from the recent past. This evening is also a big one for the sharing of snacks and refreshments, so come prepared! There will also be a big drawing! (Details on page 2.)
- 13 Second Wednesday Bird Walk at Greenfield, Botetourt Center at Greenfield 8:00am. Leader: Toni Pepin (571-246-2598)**  
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: Greenfield Education and Training Center, 57 S Center Dr, Daleville, VA 24083** 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.
- 16 Mill Mountain Park, Saturday 8:00am. Leaders: Linda Cory (540-580-5214) and Sissy Logan (540-353-4500)**  
Join Linda and Sissy for a morning walk through the gardens atop Mill Mountain. The park at the peak of Mill Mountain is a beautiful horticultural and avian spot, especially in spring.  
**Directions: 2000 JB Fishburn Pkwy SE, Roanoke, VA 24013.** From S Jefferson Street in Roanoke City, turn onto southeast bound Walnut Avenue SE and continue as it turns into the J.B. Fishburn Parkway that twists to the top of Mill Mountain. Turn right at the "Big 'Ol Bikes" sculpture. Park in the lot adjacent to the Discovery Center to meet up with the group. From the Blue Ridge Parkway, turn at Milepost 120.4, go 2.4 miles to turn left at the "Big 'Ol Bikes" sculpture and go to the Discovery Center parking lot.
- 20 Wednesday at Green Hill Park, Salem 7:00am. (Note: specific start time.) Leader: Kent Skaggs (308-627-5414)**  
Join Kent for our annual walk around the varied habitats of this multi-use park. The grounds circle along the Roanoke River and return through new-growth forest with open margins that provide good habitat for a wide range of birds.  
**Directions: 2501 Green Hill Park Road, Salem, 24175.** From West Main Street, Salem, turn left at Diaguids Lane. In less than ½ mile, cross the Roanoke River and then turn right onto Green Hill Park Road. The first right parking lot will be our gathering spot.
- 23 Happy Hollow Gardens Park, Saturday 8:00am. Leader: David Frye (248-459-6783)**  
We will walk through a lovely shaded garden and forested area, looking for newly arriving migrant and resident woodland birds.  
**Directions: 6697 Mount Chestnut Road, 24018,** from southbound Brambleton Ave (Route 221), turn onto westbound Roselawn Rd (Route 689), which winds its way through Cave Spring. At the junction of Mt. Chestnut Rd (Route 692) turn left and proceed along its meandering route to the park entrance road intersection, and turn right.
- 30 Keagy Village Meadows, Saturday 8:00am. Leader: Drew Daniels (248-459-6783)** Grassy meadows birding is a different thing. Birders need to exercise a bit of patience, as the grasses provide good protection for birds that nest and breed in these increasingly precious areas. Drew will show us a spot that can be productive for sparrows that may pop up at any time. Birders will need to be ready for anything that may move suddenly in the grasses or fly overhead. **Directions:** Heading south from Oak Grove toward Salem on Electric Rd, turn left onto Keagy Rd at Galen College of Nursing with Keagy Village on the right. The meet up location will be Keagy Village in the parking lot behind the **Famous Toastery restaurant (5010 Keagy Road, Roanoke, 24018).**

**HAVE A NICE SUMMER!**  
**THIS IS THE LAST NEWSLETTER AND MEETING UNTIL SEPTEMBER**

# Summer Events Calendar ~ A Further Look Ahead

## SATURDAY, JULY 18, 2026

**Annual Roanoke Valley Bird Club and Blue Ridge Wildflower Society Combined Picnic 5:00PM.** RSVP by Friday, July 10, to Carol Whiteside whitesidemules@yahoo.com or 540.774.2143. Please bring a side dish or dessert.

**Directions:** Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs facility See details on page 7.

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 2026

**Austin's Hummingbird Celebration, Potluck and Walk. Hosts: Robin and Allen Austin 540-676-0951.** Join us for a bird walk at 8:30 am, or come to enjoy hanging out with the hummingbirds at our home. We will have a potluck lunch about noon.

**Directions:** 10513 Bottom Creek Road, Bent Mountain, VA 24059. If there are questions, call Robin 540-676-0951.

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 2026

**Summer Butterfly Walk at Greenfield, Saturday 9:00am. Leader: Toni Pepin 571-246-2598.** Toni will take us to one of our favorite viewing grounds – Greenfield Lake, but this time focusing on beautiful butterflies! So, dial those binoculars for close-up viewing and enjoy this summertime walk. The Cherry Blossom Trail at Greenfield is mostly level for easy walking about 1-mile each way. **Directions:** Greenfield Education and Training Center, 57 S Center Dr, Daleville, VA 24083. Take Exit 150B on I-81 and follow signs for Route 220 N. 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.

## April Highlights

### April Meeting Notes

Monday, April 13, 2026

**Secretary Karen Frye** noted there were 74 members and guests in attendance. **Deborah Ingram** presented a Conservation Organization Award stature from Past President Carole Massart given to the RVBC in the '60s. [Details on page 6.] **David Frye** introduced himself as the night's guest speaker presenting "Tour of Southern Africa in Birds and Wildlife." The program visited several National Parks in the southern continent, showcasing Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa. Dave described experiences, people, and feelings that were impactful during this trip of a lifetime.

### April Field Trip Reports

**March 21, Field Trip to Bent Mountain Center and Bottom Creek Road, Leader: Robin Austin** Another large group of nearly 20 participants gathered on this Saturday early evening, hoping to see American Woodcocks perform their courtship rituals. The crowd understood that "sometimes you find the birds and sometimes you don't," but that didn't deter the group from staying in the field well past last light. The highlights from this beautiful evening were Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (perhaps beginning its springtime migration north?) and an Eastern Meadowlark (singing from the very top of a tree with its yellow breast shining in the light of sunset, a "life" bird for several participants that night). As for the stars of the show, the American Woodcocks played it very coy, only being heard, but not seen. Nearly 30 species were observed on the day.

#### March 29, Field Trip to Roanoke Valley Sewage Treatment Plant, Leader: Kent Davis. Drew Daniels, Photographer ▼

A group of 16 participants took in the sights of the treatment plant environs, always a treat for birders! The group wound its way around the settling ponds, bagging 41 species in the morning. Highlights included Brown-headed Cowbird (they're back), Purple Finch, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Osprey, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wood Duck, and at an additional nearby location, an early Yellow-crowned Night Heron.

**April 8, Field Trip to Oak Grove Park, Leader: David Frye** A small group of four met at a local spot for a sunny Wednesday. They were treated to a good collection of birds in the morning observing 22 species. Most all of the "likely suspects" chirped in, with the highlights being a Brown Thrasher singing everything in his songbook (and everyone else's, for that matter) and a Hermit Thrush. It would be great to say that the group worked very hard to get good looks at that bird, but in fact it was seen unhurriedly walking through short grass on an island in the parking area, maybe 30 feet away. That just reinforced the sage advice that we've all heard before, "Don't forget to bird the parking lot!"





**CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION  
AWARD**

PRESENTED TO

**ROANOKE VALLEY BIRD CLUB**

BY

**THE VIRGINIA WILDLIFE FEDERATION**

AND

**THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION**

IN COOPERATION WITH

**THE SEARS ROEBUCK FOUNDATION**

FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

TO THE WISE USE AND MANAGEMENT

OF THE NATIONS NATURAL RESOURCES

**Deborah Ingram** presented this “GOAT” Award during the April 13, 2026, meeting that her good friend, RVBC Past President (1968-1969) **Carole Massart**, has been safe keeping. **Don Wilson** (who took the photo) then contacted Gary Moore, PhD, Professor Emeritus, North Carolina State University, and Curator, the *Friday Footnote*, Blog focusing on Rural America. Don inquired, “I came across the article you wrote in 2021 about the Sears Roebuck Foundation while researching the background of the pictured award given to the Roanoke Valley Bird Club... Any light you can shed on this is appreciated.” Dr. Moore responded, “It was given in 1968 to the Roanoke Valley Bird Club. At one time Sears had a great online archive about their activities but that no longer exists since Sears folded. So the next best thing is to find newspaper articles. One article was in the *Roanoke Times* on September 18, 1968. The other article is from the *Lynchburg Daily Advance*, also in 1968.”

Established in 1957, it is apparent the 1960s were important growing years for the Roanoke Valley Bird Club. During this period in the mid-1960s, the beginning of the Blue Ridge Parkway Bluebird Trail was acknowledged in the *Roanoke Times* on March 16, 1969, to support the conservation and recovery of the Eastern Bluebird, which was nearing extinction between the 1920s and the 1970s, with a critical decline of up to 90% reported by the early 1970s.

Deborah recounts, “I can remember going with Carole Massart and others to monitor, clean, and repair the boxes. They were all painted a dull pink color. It was talk of the town then, about those pink boxes on the Parkway. I know Raymond Harper (Dr. Harper) was instrumental in research and building the specific boxes needed to house bluebirds. I have many fond memories of birding with Carole and others!”

Could the Roanoke Valley Bird Club’s support of the Eastern Bluebirds' road to recovery have been a factor in becoming the recipient of this 1968 award? The 33 box Blue Ridge Parkway Bluebird Trail is considered to be the oldest documented bluebird trail in Virginia and possibly nationally (by ten years or more).

~Submitted by **Carol Whiteside** with appreciation to everyone that contributed.

# Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and Roanoke Valley Bird Club

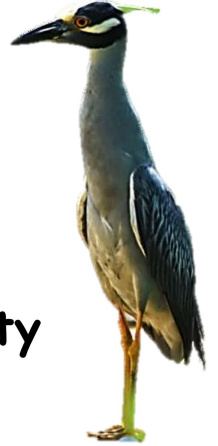
Cordially invite you to the

## Annual Picnic

Saturday, JULY 18, 2026, 5:00 PM

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs inside facility

3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018



- Rain or shine, we are inside with unloading in the covered portico entrance
- 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
- Door Prize Drawing

### Schedule:

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

Please RSVP by Friday, July 10, to:

Carol Whiteside

540-774-2143 or

whitesidemules@yahoo.com

With the number in your party attending

See you then and there!





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

# Memorial Day Remembrances

www.roanokevalleybirdclub.com

RVBC NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026



## Roanoke Valley Bird Club

### Membership Application/Renewal Form

Memberships expire on August 31, each year

2026

(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