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# Goldfinch Gazette

## The Newsletter of the Rockingham Bird Club

<http://rockinghambirdclub.com>

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### JUNE MEETING

**DATE:** Thursday, June 7, 2018

**TIME:** 7:00 PM

**PLACE:** Detwiler Auditorium, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, 1501 Virginia Avenue, Harrisonburg, VA 22802.

**PROGRAM:** *Birds of the Year* – presented by Diane Lepkowski and Greg Moyers

Join our own Rockingham Bird Club birders/photographers Diane Lepkowski and Greg Moyers as they share photos, adventures, and experiences of June 2017 through May 2018. The presentation will feature local area birding and include a few adventures from places afar. Diane and Greg hope to share not just photos but also their birding enthusiasm, along with site-specific highlights to help new birders and/or birders new to the locale enjoy and appreciate the birds that grace our area.

Join us for dinner with Diane and Greg before the meeting: Taste of India, 498-D, University Blvd, Harrisonburg, VA 22801. Dinner is at 5:30 pm, call/text Robyn Puffenbarger at 540-908-7335 or email [rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu](mailto:rpuffenb@bridgewater.edu) in advance if you plan to attend.

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### JUNE FIELD TRIPS - *Diane Lepkowski*

*Members and guests welcome. Minors (under 18) must be accompanied by a parent or adult.*

**Seneca Rocks WVA, Wednesday June 13** - Meet at 7:30 AM at Food Maxx International grocery store on Route 33 west (across the street from the car washes). A day trip is planned with several stops along the way as we check out the scenery and birds between the West Virginia State line and Seneca Rocks. Bring snacks, food and drink as we plan to picnic at the Seneca Rocks Picnic Area around noon. Sunscreen and insect repellent are recommended as well. We may spend some time at the Seneca Rocks Visitor Center too. Depending upon birding excitement we plan to head home between 3 and 4 PM and should be back around 5:30. Please make appropriate travel plans ahead of time if you need to be back earlier. Call Tom Mizell by Monday June 11 at 540-810-5898 if you plan to attend and for clarification. Rain date is Friday, June 15.

**Union Springs, Thursday, June 14** - Greg Moyers will lead a trip to Union Springs to listen for Whip-poor-wills and Chuck-will's-widows. Meet at the Food Lion parking lot on Rt. 42 **south** at 7:00 PM. Please contact Greg at [gwmoyers@msn.com](mailto:gwmoyers@msn.com) or 434-3029 if you plan to attend.

**Summer Hillendale Monthly Walks, Third Thursdays, June 21, July 19 and August 16:** Meet at the main shelter at 8:00 AM.

**BIRD CLUB BOOK CLUB** - The BCBC will meet Thursday, June 28 at the home of Elizabeth Ihle for a carry-in dinner to discuss the book: *The Penguin Lessons: What I Learned from a Remarkable Bird* by Tom Michell. We welcome new members. Questions: Please call Elizabeth Ihle (540-421-5257) or email her at [eliza51@aol.com](mailto:eliza51@aol.com).

**Virginia Society of Ornithology Annual Meeting, May 18-20, Harrisonburg** – Many thanks to the many Rockingham Bird Club members who volunteered to help make the meeting a success! Most field trip leaders were RBC volunteers, and many of us helped with registration and other logistics. The weekend was filled with presentations and field trips; and included a banquet with a wonderful presentation on female bird song by keynote speaker Nathan Pieplow, author of the new Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Eastern North America.



**Nathan Pieplow – Author & VSO Meeting Keynote Speaker**, on VSO field Trip to Shenandoah National Park (reading from his new book!)

*Photo courtesy of Shirley Devan*

## **TRIP REPORTS**

### **Switzer Dam – Greg Moyers**

Seven attendees enjoyed a beautiful and birdy morning at Switzer Dam on May 9. As we got out of the cars after pulling off Rt. 33, we immediately heard Yellow-throated Vireos singing. William Leigh soon located one of the songsters and the group got nice looks as two males sang a duet on either side of the road. At our next stop, we were treated to nice looks at both male and female Cerulean Warbler. A beautiful Blackburnian Warbler sang from the top of a snag as we returned to the cars. This was the first of what would be over 15 Blackburnians seen and heard on the trip. As we drove alongside the lake, we heard bird chatter and pulled over to check things out. We found a nice group of birds highlighted by a pair of male Bay-breasted Warblers, a Cape May Warbler, and a Northern Parula.

After crossing the bridge at the back of the lake, we checked out several of the camp areas. Highlights there included a female Hairy Woodpecker peeking out of a presumed nest hole, Red-breasted Nuthatches at multiple stops, and a gorgeous Magnolia Warbler.

Other notables seen or heard included Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Acadian Flycatcher, Cooper's Hawk, and Wood Thrush. The big highlights were the 15 species of warblers – American Redstart, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Black-and-White, Black-throated Green, Cape May, Cerulean, Chestnut-sided, Hooded, Magnolia, Northern Parula, Ovenbird, Pine, Worm-eating, and Yellow-rumped.

### **Hillandale Monthly Walk – Tom Mizell**

On May 8, 2018, exactly one month after we enjoyed a walk with temperatures in the thirties, 18 Rockingham Bird Club Members and 3 guests enjoyed sunny skies with temps in the 50s-60s at Hillandale Park. Wish-list birds included: Scarlet Tanager, Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Hummingbird, Cuckoo and Emperor Penguin. Those that attend the Rockingham Bird Club meetings likely know who suggested "Emperor Penguin." Ticks were the topic of our moment for safety.

It is always interesting to note the sightings as we gather in the parking lot and on this day, there was a lot of gathering in the parking lot as our beginning entourage was 17 birders. Our list began with American Robin, Carolina Wren, Eastern Towhee, Common Grackle, Blue Jay, European Starling and Great-crested Flycatcher "wheeping" to the west beyond the power lines. Crossing the pedestrian bridge at the Cabin we added Northern Cardinal. A Common Yellowthroat stirred up excitement and gave many of the group fleeting glimpses. This started the warbler parade and soon we enjoyed a Northern Parula Warbler high in the trees behind the cabin. Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadee and Brown Thrasher were next to draw us to the "fork in the gravel travel." Usually we take the right fork but Greg Moyers' keen ears carried the group to the left about 100 yards. That move enabled many to see a Blue-winged Warbler. Nice treat! A Swainson's Thrush soon appeared as well. By 8:45 AM we added Indigo Bunting, Chestnut-sided and Black-throated Green Warblers. In the midst of the warbler fun, a Brown-headed Cowbird decided to show itself as well. 21 Species. As we peered into the canopy I suddenly noticed many more people on the trail. For a few minutes our group and Diane Lepkowski's Lifelong Learning Institute Bird Class managed to safely pass each other, sharing brief conversation about birds seen and being seen. There must have been 30 or more birding enthusiasts on this section of trail, and to my knowledge there were no serious collisions.

Walking north along the golf course boundary we added Mourning Dove, Fish Crow, Red-bellied Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Hairy Woodpecker, Mallard and a Black Vulture pair.

By 10 AM we were at the main shelter and by then added American Goldfinch, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Downy Woodpecker, Nashville Warbler and three more birders. "There it goes!" was heard at least a couple times as we found ourselves trying to make sure all got good looks at the birds, particularly the warblers. A striking Blackburnian Warbler brought forth many appreciative comments as it foraged in the trees. A Red-tailed Hawk glided past, along with an American Crow. We saw what may have been one of the "few yet to depart" White-throated Sparrows.

Our final additions, as we walked along the stream channel just upstream of the cabin, included Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, Turkey Vulture, Northern Mockingbird, House Wren and Cedar Waxwing. A Green Heron caught our attention as it flew to the south. By 10:30 we were back near the cabin having enjoyed 46 species including 10 warblers. We walked the trail loop south of the cabin

and around 11:40 AM I reluctantly departed the park. My cell phone sounded as I pulled out of the parking lot. About 15 minutes later I checked the phone only to hear a message from Diane Lepkowski as she along with Karen and Annie Shank "spotted a Scarlet Tanager in the trees above your vehicle". Wouldn't you know it! The Scarlet Tanager was one of our wish-list birds and was showing its colorful side. I had driven away completely oblivious at the moment to its smiling presence! Hope to see you this summer on the trail.

## BIRD SIGHTINGS

Diane Holsinger reported a **Great-crested Flycatcher** at her place in Timberville on April 25, three **Eastern Kingbirds** on Grist Mill Rd on April 26, and a **Gray Catbird** at her place April 27. On May 1, Diane added a **Nashville Warbler**, **Red-headed Woodpecker**, and **Baltimore Orioles** to her yard list.

Herb Myers reported his first **Wood Thrush** of the year in Keezletown on April 25, first **Indigo Bunting** on May 1, and **Red-eyed Vireo** and **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** on May 5. Herb also reported an **Eastern Phoebe** nest with five eggs on a downspout behind his house and a probable **Red-tailed Hawk** nest on his neighbor's property.

Shaphan Shank has reported numerous good birds at Union Springs in the past month. On April 26, Shaphan reported **Great-crested Flycatcher**, **Scarlet Tanager**, **Wood Thrush**, **Ovenbird**, and **Worm-eating, Black-and-white, Blackburnian, Pine, Yellow-rumped, and Black-throated Green Warblers**. On May 3, he reported **Osprey**, **Bald Eagle**, **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**, **Chuck-wills-widow**, **Eastern Wood-Pewee**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, **Veery**, **Swainson's Thrush**, **Wood Thrush**, and 18 warbler species, including **Bay-breasted, Palm, Magnolia, Nashville, Cape May, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue**, and many of our more common resident warbler species. Shaphan added a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** to the list on May 5 and a **Yellow-throated Warbler** on May 7. He saw a pair of **Wood Thrushes** building a nest on May 6 and **Ovenbirds** building a nest on May 7. On May 19, he found a roosting **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will**.

Greg Moyers reported at least one **Bobolink** on Goods Mill Rd on April 26. Herb Myers reported a **Grasshopper Sparrow** at the same location on April 27.

A **Northern Waterthrush** spent at least two weeks at Cooks Creek Arboretum in Bridgewater in early-mid May. A **Willow Flycatcher** has been present since at least May 9. Other notables at this location include **Yellow Warbler**, **Blackpoll Warbler**, and **Warbling Vireo**.

Greg Moyers reported **Orchard Oriole**, **Palm Warbler**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Osprey**, **Spotted Sandpiper**, and **Greater Yellowlegs** at Lake Shenandoah on May 1.

Gabriel Mapel and Vic Laubach reported three **Dunlins** at Leonard's Pond on May 2. They also found a **Least Sandpiper**, **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**, and **Blue-winged Teal** at the Nazarene Church Rd wetland and the resident **Eurasian Collared-Doves** on Dry River Rd on the same date.

William Leigh found a **Blue-winged Warbler** and a **Black-billed Cuckoo** at Paul State Forest on May 3.

Also on May 3, Greg Moyers reported a **Black-billed Cuckoo**, **Nashville Warbler**, and **Blue-winged Warbler** at Hillandale Park.

William Leigh reported a **Dunlin**, along with **Semipalmated Plovers**, **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, and **Pectoral**, **Least**, **Spotted**, and **Solitary Sandpipers** at the Oakwood Drive pond near Mt. Crawford on May 5. On the same date, William reported a **Northern Bobwhite** at Leonard's Pond.

Dave Nealon reported a few dozen **Bobolinks** on Indian Trail Rd at Lacey Spring on May 5.

Diane Lepkowski had an **Ovenbird** and an **American Redstart** at her place near Harrisonburg on May 5 and added a **Common Yellowthroat** on May 6.

Greg Moyers reported a **White-rumped Sandpiper** at Oakwood Drive on May 8.

William Leigh found a **Mourning Warbler** at Paul State Forest on May 10.

Tom Lord had a **Cape May Warbler** at his place in Bridgewater on May 10.

Shaphan Shank reported a displaying **American Woodcock** at the Skidmore Fork trail on Rt. 33 on May 10.

Allen Lerner and John Pancake added a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** to the Oakwood Drive pond list and reported **Red Crossbills**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, and a **Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush** on Briery Branch Rd on May 10.

Greg Moyers reported a **Least Flycatcher** and **Blackpoll**, **Cape May**, and **Tennessee Warblers** at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU on May 11. On the same date, Greg reported that the **Common Nighthawks** had returned to the field adjoining the Broadway Community Park.

Diane Holsinger and Matt Gingerich saw a **Short-billed Dowitcher** at Fort Lynne Rd on May 12.

Greg Moyers reported an **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** at Sparkling Springs on May 12.

Matt Gingerich found several **Dickcissels** at Woodlands Church Rd near Broadway on May 12. On May 14, Matt also reported **Bobolinks** and **Grasshopper Sparrow** at this location.

Greg Moyers reported **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum and Hillandale Park on May 15. Greg also had a singing **Mourning Warbler** at Hillandale Park and a **White-rumped Sandpiper** at the Nazarene wetland on the same date.

Kevin Shank reported a **Chuck-Will's-Widow** calling along Hopkins Gap Rd at Fulks Run on May 17.

Matt Gingerich found a **Prothonotary Warbler**, **Common Merganser**, **Semipalmated Plover**, **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, and a **White-rumped Sandpiper** on Plains Mill Rd, east of Timberville, on May 23.

**NAME TAGS** – Remember to please find your name tag on the back table and wear for the duration of the meeting. Please return it after the meeting. Thanks!

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