



**March 2023 Newsletter**  
of the  
**Rockbridge Bird Club,**  
encouraging  
the enjoyment, knowledge, &  
conservation of birds in the Rockbridge Area

**Calendar**

**Sat., Mar. 11, 8:30 a.m. — Second-Saturday Birding at Boxerwood \***  
***Be alert for possible impromptu excursions!***

**Second-Saturday Birding at Boxerwood: March 11 at 8:30 a.m.**

We'll again meet in the Nature Center parking lot (963 Ross Road) for a two-hour stroll. People of all ages and all levels of experience have been coming to these events, enjoying each other's company as well as the variety of birds at Boxerwood.

Dress for the weather, wear sturdy footwear, and bring binoculars. In the event of inclement weather, the walk will be cancelled. For more information, contact Second-Saturday coordinator Bonnie Bernstein: 540-460-9147 or [bonnie.bernstein@gmail.com](mailto:bonnie.bernstein@gmail.com).

**Feeder Watch at the Y**



Last month, Club member Bonnie Bernstein assisted Jess Sullivan, Boxerwood's Early Education coordinator, in developing a bird feeding station at the YMCA's Early Learning Center. Last week, a group of four-year-olds had a chance to try it out.

Bonnie and Jess had installed a feeder viewable through a large hallway window. Indoors, beside the window, they hung a flannel board designed to be an interactive bird log. In the middle they attached a picture of the feeder. To the side they placed a holder for pictures of many birds the preschoolers might see.

The feeding station was in place for Boxerwood’s scheduled visit to the center to deliver a “Bird Talk” program, introducing young children to local birds and teaching them how to identify birds by their colors and songs. “Bird Talk” is also about helping birds by feeding them in winter and during migration, and by leaving brush piles for shelter.

During her visit, Jess invited the children to look out the window to watch for birds. She showed them how to use the flannel board to log the birds they observed and where they observed them (over, on, or under the feeder).



*Photo by Jesse Morris, from the Macaulay Library*

She also brought the children outdoors to scatter seeds for ground-feeding birds. When they noticed a mourning dove perched in a nearby tree watching them, she showed the kids how to use binoculars to get a closer look and brought out an Identifier™ to “talk” to the dove. The children mimicked its mournful song: “Lost my shoe, boo-hoo-hoo!”

One teacher reported to Jess that even before her visit, preschoolers had noticed birds at the feeder and stopped to look.

The Rockbridge Bird Club provided the components for the feeder station and member expertise for this project. Bonnie and Wendy Richards have worked with Jess Sullivan at Boxerwood on several other birding programs for young children. This is one more feather in their Club volunteer cap!

## **Conservation Actions**

Our membership in the American Bird Conservancy brings us invitations to sign on to group letters advocating for policies and legislative actions that benefit birds. So the Rockbridge Bird Club is able to join national, regional, and other local groups in communicating to decision makers.

This past month, we signed two letters. One was to the EPA, urging them to make major changes to rodenticide registration. A poisoned rodent may take several days to die and can meanwhile be consumed by a predator (a Red-Tailed Hawk or Barred Owl, for example), who in turn absorbs the poison. Even small amounts may be harmful to birds, often causing sublethal effects such as immunosuppression and loss of motor control. You’ll find more information [in the letter](#).

The second was addressed to the House and Senate Agriculture Committee leaders, urging them to protect the \$20 billion included in the Inflation Reduction Act for agriculture conservation and climate-smart agriculture. The two committees are beginning to consider the 2023 Farm Bill; the letter urges them not to cut these funds in

the process. Funded programs benefit farmers and rural communities — and, by creating habitat, birds and other wildlife as well. Habitat loss is a critical issue for all fauna and flora. You'll find the whole letter [here](#).

As we all know, birds are under many threats; the American Bird Conservancy stays informed and works to counter them. Individuals can join [ABC](#), too, of course! Besides supporting conservation, you can explore their Bird Library: have a look at the species account for our [Black-and-white Warbler](#)!



*Black-and-white Warbler.  
Still common but trending downward;  
greatest threat: loss of forest habitat ([ABC](#)).  
Photo by Ryan Schain, from the Macaulay Library*

*scroll down for one more photo*



JOIN THE CLUB by making out a check for \$15 or more per household to Rockbridge Bird Club and sending it, along with your address, email address, and phone number, to Jan Smith, 564 Big Hill Road, Lexington, VA 24450. Thank you.

For more information about the Club, visit our website at [www.rockbridgebirdclub.org](http://www.rockbridgebirdclub.org) and find us on Facebook.

Contact the Club by email at [rockbridgebirdclub@gmail.com](mailto:rockbridgebirdclub@gmail.com), or call Laura Neale, 540-261-1909.

### Club Officers

President, vacant  
Vice President, vacant  
Secretary, Joyce Cambron  
Treasurer, Jan Smith  
Program Chair, vacant

Field Trip Chair, Wendy Richards  
Conservation Chair, Laura Neale  
Publicity Chair, Bonnie Bernstein  
Membership Chair, Alexia Smith  
Club Ornithologist, Dick Rowe

Newsletter edited by Alexia Smith. Logo by Jennifer Cox  
Website managed by Bob Biersack  
Facebook page manager needed



*Barred Owl. Fairly common, range expanding to west; vulnerable to collisions with cars and to loss of forest habitat ([ABC](#)).  
Photo by Jim Emery, from All About Birds*