



April 2014 Newsletter

of the Rockbridge Bird Club, encouraging the enjoyment, knowledge, and conservation of birds in the Rockbridge Area.

Calendar

Program meetings are held at 7 pm in the Old Courthouse meeting room, in downtown Lexington. Informal gatherings are held at 5 pm in Munger Lodge at Boxerwood, on Ross Road. Field trips are half day unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday April 9th at 7 pm – Program, Donna Finnegan, “Birding by Ear 101” *

Saturday April 19th at 7 am – Field Trip: Brushy Hills *

Saturday May 3rd at 6 am - Field trip: Apple Orchard Mountain

Saturday May 10th, time TBA – Field trip: Summers property, Cold Mountain

Wednesday May 14th at 5 pm - Informal gathering

Saturday May 24th, time TBA – Field Trip: Natural Bridge, led by Wes Teets

Saturday June 7th carpool at 7:30am – Appalachian Trail birding hike

Wednesday September 10th at 7 pm - Program: Dick Rowe, Chincoteague

Friday - Sunday, September 12th-14th - Virginia Society of Ornithology fall field trip: Chincoteague

Wednesday October 8th at 7 pm - Teta Kain, “Feeding Wild Birds”

**See article below*

*** *Birding by Ear 101*” by Donna Finnegan, Wednesday, April 9, 7 p.m. at the Old Courthouse meeting room**

Rappahannock Master Naturalist Donna Finnegan’s program on recognizing the songs and calls of Virginia birds is intended for backyard birders first learning how to identify birds by their chips, chirps, chirrs and trills—as well as more experienced birders who want to brush up on their skills.

Donna Finnegan describes herself as foremost an avid birder, with special interest as well in amphibians and reptiles, gardening with native plants, and wildlife conservation. Together she and her husband, Marty, build bluebird boxes to benefit the Friends of Lake Anna State Park (FOLASP) and manage a 38-box trail at the Park.

*** 15th Annual Birdwalk in Brushy Hills, Saturday, April 19, at 7 a.m.**

Paul Cabe, W&L ornithologist, will lead this walk; the Brushy Hills forest is a haven for woodland birds, close to Lexington. Meet at 7 a.m. at the Brushy Hills trailhead: from Lexington, drive to the end of Ross Road (2.3 miles from the city limits) and turn right on Union Run Road; continue 0.6 miles to the Brushy Hills Trails sign and Town Spring, a low stone building on the right. For more information please call Alexia Smith, 463-4010. Cosponsored with the Friends of Brushy Hills.

Impromptu April field trip?

If somebody decides on one we'll send out an email. Or if you want to invite Club members to meet you somewhere for birdwatching, we will put out the word. Email us at rockbridgebirdclub@gmail.com.

Club Website Launch (Drum roll please!)

The arrival of spring elicits much anticipation of what's ahead for us birders and in that spirit I am thrilled to announce the unveiling of the Rockbridge Bird Club website: <http://www.rockbridgebirdclub.org>. It is with much gratitude that I thank our webmaster, Bob Biersack. He has created a very informative and easy to navigate site that will enhance communication and help us get the word out about our active and well-established bird club.

I also want to credit Dick Rowe for providing his wonderful bird photographs, which will be a highlight of the website. You will notice that the photo on the home page will change periodically, since he has provided us with so many wonderful photographs. Local artist Jennifer Cox designed our logo, which features the Black and White Warbler, our mascot bird.

Also on the site you will find a calendar of upcoming events, contacts, links to resources and learning guides. For those of you who like to keep up with the local bird buzz check out the blog entries. Also notice the icon of an envelope in the upper right hand corner of every page, which provides an easy way to send us your comments and questions. This "elegant" (Alexia's descriptive word for the website) resource will be a source of enjoyment and pride for the club as we move forward.

--Wendy Richards



Birding Destination: Natural Bridge

Birding and wildlife tours are coming to Natural Bridge! Over 150 bird species have been seen on the property. Kentucky and Blue-winged Warblers breed here, and many uncommon and unusual species have been seen passing through, including Olive-sided Flycatcher, Marsh and Sedge Wrens, and Mourning and Connecticut Warblers.

The spring program begins April 1 and ends June 21, and the fall program will run August 21 through October 21. There are two tours per day--one at 6 AM, and a longer one at 8 AM, where we will explore the more remote areas on the property. Tours are free for bird club members. An "Early Bird" continental breakfast (5-7 AM) is \$5, and the full buffet breakfast (7-10 AM) is \$10. More details to come on our website (www.naturalbridgeva.com) soon. Contact Wes Teets, wteets@naturalbridgeva.com, with questions.

--Wes Teets

Bluebird Conservation Project Update

Volunteers for the Rockbridge Bluebird Conservation Project have been extraordinarily busy in preparation for nest-monitoring this season. Already the scope of the project has expanded considerably from the initial goal – to recruit and train volunteers to maintain and monitor a dozen nest boxes along the Woods Creek Trail for the City of Lexington.

As of March, the project encompasses numerous nest boxes located throughout the county - Woods Creek, W&L Trail, Boxerwood, Kendal, and properties of county residents.

Volunteers, including 6 Master Naturalists, are set to monitor these boxes. Additionally, some 75 Waddell Elementary School third and fourth-graders will help 3 Master Naturalists monitor boxes along the Woods Creek trail that are adjacent to the school grounds, and will participate in classroom-integrated lessons facilitated by Boxerwood.

Generous and skilled volunteers David Buckner and Cleve Hickman built and donated 15 nest boxes for Boxerwood and individuals who had requested them. In lieu of payment, recipients joined the Virginia Bluebird Society.

Earlier this month, volunteers constructed two types of predator guards for new and existing nest boxes. All boxes on the Woods Creek and Boxerwood trails are now equipped with both guards, qualifying them to be listed as bluebird trails with the Virginia Bluebird Society. (The W&L boxes are mounted on light poles, so only entry hole guards could be affixed.)

All monitors participating in the Bluebird Conservation Project are using the NestWatch website platform to record and share nest-watching data. NestWatch, a monitoring program run by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, tracks status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds across the county.

Bird club members are welcome and encouraged to join our NestWatch "community" and monitor nests for any bird species, in nest boxes or in the open. For more information, go to <http://www.rockbridgebirdclub.org/1/post/2014/03/bluebird-conservation-project-update.html> or contact Bonnie (bonnie.bernstein@gmail.com).



At Boxerwood, Hank Dobin installs a "blue" nest box built by Dave Buckner.

—Bonnie Bernstein



For more information about the Club visit our website at www.rockbridgebirdclub.org

Contact the Club by email at rockbridgebirdclub@gmail.com or call Wendy Richards, 540-463-5214, or Laura Neale, 540-261-1909.

Join the Club by making out a check for \$15 or more to Rockbridge Bird Club and sending it, along with your address, email address, and phone number, to Betty Besal, 104 Shake Rag Road, Lexington, VA 24450. Thank you.

Club Officers

President, Wendy Richards
Secretary, Alexia Smith
Program Chair, Sarah Burleson
Publicity Chair, Bonnie Bernstein
Membership Chair, Adrienne Bodie

Vice President, Laura Neale
Treasurer, Betty Besal
Field Trip Chair, Kerry Kilday
Club Ornithologist, Dick Rowe

Newsletter edited by Alexia Smith & produced by Jan Smith. Please send feedback & news items to alexia@rockbridge.net