



December 2014 Newsletter

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

Calendar

Unless otherwise noted, program meetings are held at 7 pm in the Old Courthouse meeting room, in downtown Lexington.

2014

Saturday, Dec. 6th, 8:00-10:00 am - Boxerwood Bird Walk *

December, 20th all day - Christmas Bird Count, and potluck at 5:30 pm at
Boxerwood *

2015

Saturday, Jan. 3rd, 8:00-10:00 am - Boxerwood Bird Walk *

Wednesday, Feb. 11th, 7 pm - Program: Katie Fallon, "Cerulean Warblers"

Wednesday, April 8th, 7 pm – Program: Sergio Harding, bird conservation biologist
with the Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries

* *See article below*

* **Field Trips**

***First-Saturday Boxerwood Birdwalks, December 6th and January 3rd,
8:00 a.m.***

Kerry Kilday will again be leading these morning walks, on December 6th and January 3rd. Meet at the Boxerwood parking lot at 8 a.m. for about two hours in the garden's varied habitats. For more information, call Kerry at 561-389-9612. For directions, go to <http://boxerwood.org/visit/index.asp>.

Christmas Bird Count & Potluck Supper on Saturday, December 20th

Sign up to count in the Rockbridge CBC with Dick Rowe at

RoweRA@vmi.edu. Here is Dick's message about plans:

If you would like to participate in the counting, please let me know. You don't have to be an insane birder (it is helpful but not necessary) to assist with the Count. In general, our Count circle is centered on Big Spring and forms a circle with a 7.5-mile radius. All counting is done inside the circle.



White Throated Sparrow: You might see him on the CBC. Photo: Dick Rowe

As a participant, you can cover an area inside the circle, be a member of a team/group covering an area (for those of you who are new to CBC or are not confident of your bird ID skills this is a good way to participate), or count birds at your home bird feeder. If you'd like to cover a particular area or the area you've done in past years, let me know (who will be with you and where you will count). If you'd like to join a team, let me know and I'll put you in contact with a "team leader." If you'd like to do a feeder count, let me know and I'll send you the feeder-count rules.

There are a few changes to the Count from previous years. In the past we've met for lunch at the Redwood. The Redwood no longer exists – it has morphed into some other eating establishment. So, we will NOT meet for lunch on Saturday. Instead, as a new tradition, we'll gather for a post-Count potluck at 5:30 at Boxerwood (see details below). —Dick Rowe

Everyone is welcome at the Christmas Bird Count potluck—family, too! Here's a message from coordinator Betty Besal:

Please join us for a potluck dinner on Saturday, December 20th, beginning at 5:30 at the Boxerwood Lodge.

Boxerwood will be the headquarters for our Christmas Bird Count that day. The Club and Boxerwood will be providing refreshments, lunchtime soup, and a spot to warm up and report findings for those participating in the Count. (Cont'd next page)

Will a Purple Finch be on your CBC?
Photo: Dick Rowe



You do not have to participate in the CBC to attend the potluck. Consider coming just to catch up with fellow birders, get the latest scoop on the count, and maybe do a little late afternoon birding of your own in the Gardens. And if you are out counting all day, don't feel you have to provide any food. We look forward to seeing all of you!

Please let me know if you will come and what you might be bringing for our meal. The Club will provide drinks. If you are interested in helping with set-up or cleanup, let me know that, too, at bbesal5@gmail.com or 540.460.6738.

—Betty Besal

Nearby Christmas Bird Counts

The Augusta Bird Club sponsors two Counts, in case you miss ours or just can't get enough counting. The Augusta County Count is on Sunday, December 14th, and is centered in Verona; to participate, call compiler Allen Lerner at birdergonewild@yahoo.com. The Waynesboro Count is on Saturday, January 3rd, and is centered at Sherando; compiler Crista Cabe at cristacabe@gmail.com would like to hear from participants by December 15th.

New Club Officers Elected at Annual Meeting November 12

At the Annual Meeting, Club members elected Bob Biersack as the new President, with the other three officers staying on for another two-year term. Retiring President Wendy Richards presented Bob with the crow call she has used to call meetings to order, and all received a good round of applause for their willingness to serve!



2015-16 officers: From left to right. Vice-President Laura Neale, Secretary Alexia Smith, President Bob Biersack with crow call, and Treasurer Betty Besal.

The Club offered special thanks to Wendy, a founder of the new Rockbridge Bird Club in 2011 (reviving an older Rockbridge tradition) and its very first President. In appreciation, the Club presented her with a copy of the new Sibley Guide to Birds.

Also at the meeting, Betty presented the Treasurer's Report for the preceding twelve months, as follows:

Income since last report November 2013:	\$1537.00
Expenses since last report November 2013:	\$ 884.49
Current Checking Account Balance:	\$1881.29
Number of Memberships 2014: 53 household memberships	

Conservation Note: State of the Birds 2014

The State of the Birds is a snapshot report on the population status of the birds of the United States. It is produced by a group of 23 non-governmental organizations and



government agencies including the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, The American Bird Conservancy, and US Fish and Wildlife. The 2014 report is the fifth since the inception in 2009.

Since bird populations depend on healthy habitats, the report focuses on bird species that are dependent on a single primary habitat type; these "habitat obligates" serve as indicators for the health of their ecosystems. Habitats covered are

grasslands, arid lands, forests, wetlands, coasts, and oceans and islands.

Of particular interest to us, as residents of the Southern Appalachians, is the following: Since 1968, "the eastern forests indicator for 26 obligate breeding birds shows an overall drop of 32%, with a continued steady decline since 2009. Species dependent on either young forests (such as Golden-winged Warbler and Eastern Towhee) or mature deciduous forest (such as Wood Thrush and Cerulean Warbler) are showing the steepest declines. Because 84% of eastern forests are privately owned, timber companies and other forest owners can greatly benefit bird populations by maintaining large forest blocks and participating in sustainable forestry initiatives."

In addition, other species that Rockbridge birders encounter are on the Watch List, requiring "immediate conservation attention": American Woodcock, Whip-poor-will,

Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Brown Thrasher, Prairie Warbler, and Field Sparrow. The report notes that, as demonstrated by several species conservation successes, “we have the science, technology, and knowledge to prevent extinctions... When we have the will to conserve, we can make a better future: for birds, for ecosystems, for everyone.” Please check out the report to learn more about birds in other habitats: <http://www.stateofthebirds.org/>

—*Laura Neale*

\$\$\$\$\$ Renew Your Membership Now for 2015 ! \$\$\$\$\$

The year is fast coming to a close and the Club is accepting membership renewals for 2015. We hope you will mail your dues of \$15 per household to our Treasurer, Betty Besal, at 120 Chavis Ave, Lexington, VA 24450.

--*Adrienne Hall-Bodie, Membership Chair*



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

Contact the Club by email at rockbridgebirdclub@gmail.com or call Bob Biersack, 540-463-1942, or Laura Neale, 540-261-1909.

Join the Club by making out a check for \$15 per household to Rockbridge Bird Club and sending it, along with your address, email address, and phone number, to Betty Besal, 120 Chavis Avenue, Lexington, VA 24450. Thank you.

Club Officers

President, Bob Biersack

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, Vacant

Club Ornithologist, Dick Rowe

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