



November 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. Field trips are half day unless otherwise noted and the meeting place is the Lexington Food Lion parking lot.

2014

Wednesday, Nov. 12th, 7:30 pm – Program: Justin Folks, “Quail Conservation and Habitat Restoration” *; Annual Meeting (***please note meeting time, a half hour later than usual***)

Saturday, Nov. 15th - Field trip: Greenfield. Meet for carpool at 7:30 am*

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

Fri.-Sun., Dec. 5-7th - VSO winter field trip to Virginia Beach/Chesapeake Bridge-Tunnel*

December, date TBA - Christmas Bird Count

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***

- **PROGRAMS**

Quail Program & Annual Meeting Wednesday, Nov. 12, at 7:30 p.m.



Adult male Northern Bobwhite

Justin is one of five Private Lands Wildlife Biologists hired cooperatively by the Conservation Management Institute at Virginia Tech, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to implement the program.

In a brief Annual Meeting preceding the program, we'll elect Club officers for the 2015-16 term. Three current officers have agreed to stay on, and Bob Biersack has accepted the nomination for President; nominations will also be taken from the floor. Here is the slate as it stands:

Bob Biersack, President
 Laura Neale, Vice President
 Alexia Smith, Secretary
 Betty Besal, Treasurer

When did you last hear the distinctive "bob-white" call of the quail? *In The Birds of Rockbridge County, Virginia* (1957), J.J. Murray reported the Northern Bobwhite to be common. Today, Club Ornithologist Dick Rowe tells us, they're an uncommon resident here, heard all too rarely and "not expected to be seen."

At our November meeting, Justin Folks will give a talk on the Virginia Quail Recovery Initiative, a program that works with private landowners to develop wildlife habitat that benefits the Northern Bobwhite—and is good for many songbirds and pollinating insects as well.



Bobwhite babies: what does the future hold?
 (photo from <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu>)

\$\$\$\$\$ 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'll bring your dues of \$15 per household to the next meeting, on November 12th, or you may send it directly to our Treasurer, Betty Besal, at 120 Chavis Ave, Lexington, VA 24450.

--Adrienne Hall-Bodie, Membership Chair

*** Field Trips**

Greenfield Trip Saturday, November 15th, 7:30 a.m.

The Greenfield Trail in Botetourt County, though located in an industrial park, truly is green: it loops around a lake with a natural wetland and upland borders. The lake is narrow, thus affording good views of winter ducks, while other winter birds inhabit the edges. Kerry Kilday and Dick Rowe will lead. Meet at 7:30 am at the Food Lion Plaza just east of Lexington to carpool for the 30-minute drive south on I-81.

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

These are the last two in Kerry Kilday's series of monthly morning walks in Boxerwood Gardens' diverse habitats, so be sure to put these dates on your calendar. Participants meet at the parking lot and walk for about two hours. For directions, go to <http://boxerwood.org/visit/index.asp>.

***VSO trip to Virginia Beach/Chesapeake Bridge-Tunnel
December 5th to 7th***

The Virginia Society of Ornithology's annual field trip to Virginia Beach offers a chance to bird with enthusiasts from around the state and to visit such great birding places as Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and False Cape State Park.

The field trips have limits on numbers & require advance registration; rooms are available at group rates at three oceanfront hotels, with reservation deadlines in November. For more information and to sign up, go to www.virginiabirds.net. And if you want to carpool, send an email to our Club at rockbridgebirdclub@gmail.com and we'll see if we can put potential carpoolers in touch.



© Dick Rowe

Seen at Willow Lake on the October 19th field trip: many Pied-billed Grebes. Photo by Dick Rowe

Citizen Science: Project FeederWatch starts November 8th

While watching the birds out your window at home, you can collect data useful to science! Whatever your skill level, you can participate in Project FeederWatch, a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders. The data collected help scientists track broad-scale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Here's how it works: from November to early April, watch your feeder as much or as little as you want over two consecutive days (as often as every week, but less often is fine, too). You count birds that appear because of something that you've provided, whether plantings, food, or water. If you're new to the Project, when you register you'll get a Research Kit with complete instructions for participating, as well as a bird identification poster.

To find out more and to sign up, visit <http://feederwatch.org>. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada operate project FeederWatch.

Conservation Note: Strategies to Deter Window Strikes

Many of us with windows have experienced the sudden bang on one of our windows that Wendy has described mournfully as "my window murdering a bird". After a thunk, we run outdoors with fingers crossed, hoping to find a miracle. There may be a stunned bird that flies off as an apparent survivor, but usually there is either a dead or a dying bird.

Window strikes are estimated to kill 300 million to 1 billion birds a year (<http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/collisions/glass.html>). Skyscrapers and

homes are both objects occupying fly-space, their glass fooling birds into seeing reflection as reality.

Homeowners can try various methods to protect their bird visitors. For folks with feeders, it is recommended that feeders be placed either within 3 feet of windows, or over 30 feet away. Startled birds are more likely to take off at top speed and slam into windows if the feeder is in the danger zone between 3 and 30 feet.

A number of strategies that break up the expanse of window reflection are

described in an article at www.birdwatchingdaily.com (click on "15 products..." in the



Seen at McCormick's Farm on the October 19th field trip: female purple finches. Photo by Dick Rowe

changing window at upper left). One method is the application of UV stickers. The birds can see the reflected UV light breaking up an otherwise reflected outdoors space. It is important to replace these stickers annually. They can be purchased at www.windowalert.com.

A very successful strategy avowed by a birder in the region that sounds reliable and long-lasting is described thus: "To prevent bird strikes, I hung bird netting (the black plastic sheets of netting, inexpensive and widely available, for preventing birds from taking fruit from trees) from the eaves above my patio doors 10 years ago. I bought it at Lowe's. Since then, NO BIRDS HAVE HIT THE GLASS. The birds seem to see it just fine. It is almost invisible to us, easy to see through and even take photos through, durable, and totally satisfactory to save the birds. I can't recommend it more highly."

The birder adds these installation details: "I have the bottom of the bird netting sandwiched between 1x2s that weight down the bottom of the curtain. These are painted olive green, and they just sit on the bluestone patio, so the curtain does not blow in the wind. The top of the curtain is sandwiched between 1x2s that are painted white to match the eaves and are attached by hooks, so they could be removed for house painting or in super-high winds, although I have never taken them down."

Making efforts to prevent bird collisions with our windows is one way we can help the birds. Good Luck.

—Laura Neale



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 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, 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