



# THE DRUMMER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
RUSSELL COUNTY BIRD CLUB  
MEETINGS ARE THE 4<sup>TH</sup> TUESDAY  
AT THE LEBANON COMMUNITY ROOM  
AT 7:30 PM

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**MEETING:** We had a fabulous meeting. Dean, Nina and Sean Gates presented a program on owls. They had a Barn Owl, Barred Owl and a Great-Horned Owl there for us to examine. Of course they were stuffed. They not only covered everything they could about owls, but came up with quotes and old stories about owls. It was one of the best programs I have ever seen. Thank you Gates family.

**HAPPENINGS:** On February 24, Tom Hunter found a **BARNACLE GOOSE** at Elk Garden. This is probably the rarest bird ever found in Russell County. The ABA Virginia Guide shows the last sighting in Virginia to be in 1956. Being the smart birder he is, Tom contacted everyone he could. Dave Worley went out and took pictures. Larry McDaniel and Bob Riggs also went out to see it. On the 25<sup>th</sup>, the goose was gone. It showed back up on the 27<sup>th</sup> and Dave got better pictures and a video. Laverne Hunter and Jean Montgomery also got to see it on the 27<sup>th</sup>. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, it was seen at Stuarts Pond by Larry McDaniel, Rob Biller and Ron Carrico. It has not been seen since. Tom is filling out paperwork to submit to the Virginia Society of Ornithology Records Committee. If accepted, it will put Tom's name in the record book forever. This goose is normally located in Greenland, Siberia, and Europe.

Dave & Diana have really been enjoying the birds at their feeders. Nothing unusual, just Downy Woodpeckers, White Breasted Nuthatches, Red-Bellied Woodpeckers, Juncos, Goldfinches, Carolina Chickadees, Cardinals, Jays, Titmice, etc. They are really putting the feed away. They have also noticed the Eastern Bluebirds are shopping for a home. Hopefully they will pick their boxes.

On March 1, Dave & Diana birded the Hiwassee Wildlife Area in Meigs County, Tennessee. About 2,000 Sandhill Cranes were present along with 3 Greater White fronted Geese. Pictures will be shown at the March meeting.

Please let Dave (880-1373) know what you are seeing and where you are birding. It's hard to write a newsletter without your help.

**MEETING:** The program for March 24<sup>th</sup> will be presented by Ray Nease from Bishop Valley. He will have a live Harris Hawk and talk about Raptor Hunting.

**QUOTE:** "Science will never isolate or explain the special hold birds have on the hearts of men and women. But perhaps in trying to understand birds, we somehow feel closer to grasping the mystery of our own creation and evolution. Perhaps there is a bit of the migrant in each of us, and birds symbolize the freedom we envy but rarely find. Of one thing I am sure: In our awe at the mystery and wonder of birds, at those powers far beyond our ken, we feel a humility that all too seldom graces the human spirit..." Allen J. Fisher (year unknown)

**PRESIDENTS CORNER:** I want to start with a BIG THANKS to the Gates. What a great program they put together on the owls. I enjoyed it a lot and it was a HOOT!

I birded the lower end of the county on Thursday the 12<sup>th</sup>, and as I sat in a sunny spot watching sparrows, I heard the "Old Sam, Peabody, Peabody, Peabody" call of the White-Throated Sparrow. I realized they would soon be leaving for their nesting grounds in Canada. I have really enjoyed their visit, but can hardly wait for their replacements. The warblers are on their way. These butterflies of the bird world are bringing their brilliant colors to add to the spring. We folk who live in the Appalachian Mountains are fortunate that this is one of their major migration routes. Some will stay to nest in our area, while others will move on further north to breed and raise their broods. They migrate at night and feed during the day, so some lucky birders could be caught in the middle of a warbler fallout. Just imagine yourself in the midst of hundreds of feeding warblers, trying to identify all of them. Lots of them, including the Black and White were in Florida by the first of March, so it will not be long. I saw the first Yellow-Throated on 8 April last year. Be alert, the wave is coming.

Starting in early April, I will be doing my daily Warbler Walks. I will start about 7am at Hidden Valley Lake and finish up in time for work. This would be a nice warm up to start your day. Hope to see you at the meeting. Bob

**TRIPS:** March 21 Hidden Valley Lake. Meet Lebanon Community Room at 1 pm.  
April 11 Birding the Clinch River, a leisurely pace along the riparian habitat. Should be plenty of birds, but the featured guest will be the Yellow-Throated Warbler. Lebanon Community Room 8 am.  
April 19 Elk Garden. Shore birds, Swallows, Yellow Warblers and possibly an Upland Sandpiper like last year.