



NEWS RELEASE

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Garden Club of Virginia Conservation Forum to Explore Birds

New York Times Best-Selling Author Keynotes the Live, Virtual Oct. 25 Event

September 21, 2021 (Richmond, Va.)—Members of the public can learn all about birds – from their key role in the ecosystem to their unique and lesser-known skills--from experts at the Garden Club of Virginia annual Conservation Forum to be held online on Oct. 25, 2021.

Bird populations worldwide are plummeting at alarming rates. In the past 30 years, the bird population in North America has declined by three billion, or one in four birds.

“This forum will deepen our understanding of birds and their habitats and help people of all ages learn ways to protect birds in their own backyards and throughout Virginia,” said Missy Buckingham, president of the Garden Club of Virginia.

Jennifer Ackerman, New York Times best-selling author of *The Genius of Birds*, will be the keynote speaker. Ackerman will lead attendees on an armchair journey to show how birds make and use tools, count, navigate, memorize, communicate and create works of art.

Panelists include:

- Dr. Amy Johnson, Program Director, Virginia Working Landscapes, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute
- Dr. Christine Sheppard, Director, Glass Collisions Program, American Bird Conservancy
- Stephen Living, Habitat Education Coordinator, Virginia Dept. of Wildlife Resources

This 63rd annual Conservation Forum will be a Live webinar on Monday, Oct. 25, from 9 a.m. until noon. Tickets are \$15; students are free. Registration is at gcvirginia.org.

Following the keynote presentation and the panel, the Garden Club of Virginia will present the 2021 Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale Award for Meritorious Achievement in Conservation and the Conservation Educator Award.

Founded in 1920, the Garden Club of Virginia cited the protection of native trees, wildflowers and birds in its charter, along with encouraging conservation of natural resources, promoting civic planting and roadside beautification, and aiding in the restoration and preservation of historic gardens in Virginia.

“More than 100 years ago our founders recognized the importance of birds as part of the natural world that need the protection of humans in order to flourish,” said Allison Clock, chairman of the Garden Club of Virginia’s Conservation Committee. “The alarm bells are getting louder that birds need our help, and I hope that people will gain a deeper appreciation of them through this Forum,” she said.

The Conservation Forum is sponsored by Investment Management of Virginia, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management Advisor Gardener Bloemers, and Virginia Banchoff.

Co-Chairmen of the Forum are Forrest Moore of the Mill Mountain Garden Club in Roanoke and Barbara Walsh of the Blue Ridge Garden Club in Lexington.

The Garden Club of Virginia, a nonprofit organization, encompasses 48 garden clubs in Virginia representing 3,500 members. Conservation, education and historic garden restoration continue to be key pillars of its mission, along with programs in horticulture, artistic floral design and photography. To learn more, visit gcvirginia.org.

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