

# The Ridgeline

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUE RIDGE WILDLIFE CENTER

ISSUE 47

**How do your actions  
affect wildlife?**

*This male House Finch is currently  
being treated for mycoplasmosis,  
one of many feeder-borne diseases.*

# Annie Bradfield Joins BRWC



I am excited to announce that I have joined Blue Ridge Wildlife Center as the new Executive Director. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself.

Before joining the BRWC team in September, I spent the last eleven years in development and marketing for several local and international non-profits. Most notably was my time spent at the international conservation group, American Bird Conservancy, where we worked to reduce the many threats that affect our

native wildlife. I am ready to apply that experience at a local level to make our region a more beautiful, sustainable, and safe place to live for all its residents—including, and especially, local wildlife.

In my short time with BRWC I have had the honor of getting to know the dedicated and tireless staff, interns, and volunteers. Even during a pandemic, with extra safety measures in place and a surge of animal admissions, the team has ensured that each patient is given the care and attention they deserve.

It is because of you that our work is possible. Your support is the reason we can continue operating the only wildlife teaching hospital in Northern Virginia and provide educational programs and tools—including *The Ridgeline*.

I hope to have the opportunity to get to know you—our donors, volunteers, partners, and neighbors—and I look forward to sharing our stories and news with you.

With gratitude,

Annie Bradfield



## The Ridgeline

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Blue Ridge Wildlife Center is a 501(c)3 organization caring for native wildlife by integrating veterinary medicine, rehabilitation, education, and research.

BRWC is located in Boyce, Virginia on the Burwell van—Lennep Foundation's property on Island Farm Lane.

The Center relies on private donations exclusively. Contributions are tax-deductible.

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Newsletter designed by Dara Bailey Design

Cover photo by Cara Masullo.

# Is Your Hobby Hurting Wildlife?

By Jen Riley, DVM

With the ongoing restrictions in place to help reduce the spread of Covid-19, many people have been taking up new hobbies—sewing, drawing, bingeing Netflix, and in some cases, feeding wild birds! Though there are many poorly-justified claims of some benefit to the birds, there is growing concern in the scientific community about the negative effects. These include the spread of disease, the poor nutrition provided, the altering of migratory behaviors, the advantages provided to non-native species, and the artificial increase in carrying capacity for some species.

We know that the giant bags of “wild bird seed” are not well-balanced nutrition for any birds and many organizations study the population impacts of large-scale feeding, but the issue we deal with most at the Center is the occurrence of “feeder diseases”. Feeders cause animals to congregate in a way that simply would not happen in the wild. Just like outbreaks seen in human populations throughout history, close contact with poor hygiene is a perfect recipe for disease spread.

With the reported increase of individuals feeding birds this year, we have seen a dramatic increase in feeder diseases—more than double the number of patients with these diseases compared to the same time frame last year. These diseases are transmitted when birds eat from dirty feeders through direct contact or ingestion of infectious material.

The most common feeder disease we see is caused by *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, a bacterial infection that causes conjunctivitis. As of October 2020, over 30% of our finch patients were brought in for care due to this disease. This form of conjunctivitis jumped from domestic poultry into wildlife and has spread well with the assistance of dirty feeders. With swollen eyelids and discharge causing their eyes to crust over, these birds are functionally blind, preventing them from flying or evading predators. As a result, many come to us as cat attack

victims in addition to being conjunctivitis patients. In August and September, we had multiple birds coming into the facility each week with this disease—all from different locations across northern Virginia implying that this was not one outbreak from a single dirty feeder. Though most individuals recover in just days, these patients must spend a minimum of three weeks in care to receive the full recommended course of antibiotics. Shorter treatment durations may lead to an increased risk of this disease recurring quickly and these animals becoming carriers.

Another common “feeder disease” is *Trichomoniasis*, a protozoan parasite that impacts doves and finches, but also those who prey upon them. It causes plaques to form primarily in the upper gastrointestinal tract. It can also cause disease in the air sacs, lungs, and throughout the body. Many of these birds die when the thickening of the plaques prevent ingestion of food or cause regurgitation, leading to starvation. It can also cause respiratory failure. While this disease does not impact people and mammals, it can be an issue for pet birds and backyard poultry.

*Avian Poxvirus* is a highly contagious and typically fatal disease that can be spread by feeders and other methods. This virus causes wart-like growths over featherless areas (often around the face). These growths frequently blind the animal preventing them from being able to escape predators and find food.

There are many more feeder-spread



This House finch came in with classic signs of conjunctivitis caused by *Mycoplasma*. After cleaning discharge from the eye, the red, swollen tissue around the eye becomes even more obvious. Photo by Dr. Jen Riley



Though we regularly have one or two House Finches in our quarantine room, this season has forced us to make one patient room an isolation area specifically for House Finches with mycoplasmosis—sometimes up to eight birds at a time! Photo by Dr. Jen Riley.

diseases that are seen in varying numbers. Fungal diseases, viral diseases, and even external parasites like lice and mites can be spread through feeders. Many of the feeder diseases we see in wild birds are also zoonotic (can infect humans, domestic animals and wildlife), making these feeder diseases an important One Health issue. Bacterial organisms like *E.coli*, *Salmonella*, and *Campylobacter* can be a problem for many species, humans included. *Salmonellosis* is a relatively common feeder disease that can easily go undetected as some birds show no signs. Others can be severely debilitated from salmonellosis and appear fluffed and lethargic.

If you're feeding birds and NOT cleaning your feeders, you are causing these diseases to proliferate and causing birds to suffer. Please do your part to ensure you are feeding as safely as possible.

### How to prevent your hobby from spreading disease:

- Pick the right feeder! When shopping for a new feeder, be sure to find something that disassembles/reassembles easily and is made of non-porous material, such as plastic, as opposed to a difficult-to-disinfect material like wood. Avoid table/platform style feeders as feeders where birds can stand/defecate on the feeder



The swollen area around the eye of this House Finch is classic of mycoplasmosis, but the puffed up posture is seen frequently in birds that are sick for a variety of reasons. Photo by Dr. Jen Riley

will increase the spread of many diseases. Choose feeders that will keep your seed DRY. Feed that gets wet will be able to harbor many fungal and protozoan organisms more easily.

- Clean your feeders and bird baths regularly! This means at least every two weeks or more frequently in times of heavy use (hummingbird feeders are an exception and should be cleaned every three days).
- If you find sick/deceased birds, do not handle them without gloves. Your health should always be priority!

### How to support at-risk birds:

Feeding birds can be a rewarding form of human-wildlife interaction and help



Sharp-shinned Hawk *Trichomoniasis*. Photo by Dr. Jen Riley.

humans learn to love and appreciate these animals. While they may be benefitting from your food, these are also the species that do well in suburban/urban environments. This is not the majority of species nor those most at risk. Those species whose populations are declining due to habitat loss desperately need our help for survival—but not through the use of backyard feeders. How do we recommend helping these at-risk birds? Cornell's Lab of Ornithology has some great tips that are summarized here:

- 1. Making windows safer to prevent collisions.** This includes everything from better building design to murals across windows, to better use of shades and blinds, to closely-spaced (<2") dot or line patterns across your windows.
- 2. Keep pet cats inside.** After habitat loss, outdoor cats are the number one cause of bird mortality, killing billions of birds in the U.S. each year. Life outdoors is also dangerous for cats. As a pet owner, it is your responsibility to keep your cat safe and prevent it from trespassing on neighbors' property and destroying native wildlife. Cats are natural hunters and this instinct cannot be trained out of them. It is not their fault, but their owners (when they have owners) must be responsible.
- 3. Plant natives!** Traditional lawns have been widely accepted all over the country and we spend billions of dollars maintaining them each year. For what? These well-manicured monocultures do nothing for wildlife and they use up land that could otherwise be used to plant native species that will actually benefit our birds and other wildlife. Native plants don't require weekly mowing and are generally much easier to maintain. While you're skipping your yardwork, leave the leaves too! Leaf litter creates excellent habitat for the insects that our birds and their young

## How to Clean Bird Feeders Properly

- Dump any remaining seed. Take the feeder apart and use a brush to scrub with soap and warm water. Once all organic material has been rinsed away, spray with 10% bleach solution and let sit AT LEAST ten minutes. Keep in mind that bleach solutions should be stored in opaque bottles and made no more than 24 hours in advance of use. Rinse the bleach off and allow the feeder to dry FULLY before adding new feed. As old feed should never be put into a clean feeder, determine how much you go through each week and never put too much in the feeder at once. Though natural cleansers like vinegar can be useful for a variety of cleaning jobs, it is nowhere near as effective as bleach in killing bacteria, viruses, and fungal pathogens. If you are extremely sensitive to bleach, using weaker cleansers is certainly better than nothing and manual

removal with soapy water is the most important aspect as most disinfectants are severely weakened by the presence of organic material.

- Clean up the ground below your feeders. Fallen food spoils quickly and can cause health issues for wildlife or pets. It also attracts rodents and other frequently unwanted wildlife to your yard.
- If you see obvious signs of disease, clean your feeder immediately and take it down for a minimum of two weeks.
- Use proper precautions to protect yourself when cleaning feeders! Wear rubber gloves when handling and cleaning the feeders. Brushes/scrubbers used for this purpose should NOT be used for other purposes. Keep the feeder away from food preparation areas in your home. Wash your hands well after cleaning the feeder.

need to live and grow. While continued human development destroys habitats where birds can live, native gardens can offer some useable habitat where lawns would not while providing a nutritionally balanced diet. This website can assist you in finding native plants by zip code: [nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/](http://nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/).

**4. Avoid pesticides.** Pesticides can kill birds directly or indirectly through contamination of their food (insects, seeds, prey animals).

Reduce your personal use of pesticides around your home. Consider buying organic.

**5. Drink bird-friendly, shade-grown coffee.** Look for coffee labelled “bird friendly” which helps protect habitat in addition to being organic: [nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/about-bird-friendly-coffee](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/about-bird-friendly-coffee).

**6. Avoid single-use plastics that are often ingested by birds or cause them injury.** Use all of those reusable bags you have! Ask for no utensils when getting take out. Always have your refillable water bottle available so that you don't need to buy bottled water when you're out and about. Advocate for plastic bag/Styrofoam/straw bans that protect wildlife.

**7. Become a citizen scientist!** Help us monitor bird populations and activities by reporting what you see. Use platforms like **Ebird** ([ebird.org](http://ebird.org)), **Project Feederwatch** ([Feederwatch.org](http://Feederwatch.org)), and **Breeding Bird Survey** ([pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/](http://pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/)) to turn your hobby into important data that can help birds!

The jury is still out on whether or not the benefits of feeding wild birds outweigh the negative consequences. The scientific community simply doesn't know enough to make recommendations one way or the other. That said, it is clear that those who do feed could be doing more to prevent some of the negative side effects.

We love that you love wild birds and we recognize that backyard feeding will help foster an appreciation and desire to protect these animals. This appreciation is the only indisputable way in which feeders do truly have a positive impact—people will protect what they love! Just make sure you're feeding responsibly and that you are also supporting birds in proven ways by doing the seven things mentioned above.

For more details and additional resources, visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at [birds.cornell.edu/home/seven-simple-actions-to-help-birds/](http://birds.cornell.edu/home/seven-simple-actions-to-help-birds/). ■

## Supporter Spotlight: John Clark and Kevin Martin

While the majority of our volunteers are focused on rehabilitation and animal care, we do have many other opportunities available for those interested in volunteering—including cage building, repairs, and general facility maintenance!

**John Clark and Kevin Martin** are two of the volunteers who help us with various construction projects around our hospital and in our outdoor wildlife and Ambassador enclosures. We asked each of them what made them interested in volunteering with the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center!

**John:** I have always been an animal lover. There are numerous organizations and people that are dedicated to helping dogs and cats. There are very few that help our native wildlife. I get to do and see things that very few people get a chance to do. I enjoy knowing that no matter what I do on any given day, it contributes to the eventual release of a wild animal back to their home.

**Kevin:** For me, there's always been a fascination with science, biology and the natural world. Virginia has millions of animals living among us in the woods and waters around the state. From the everyday songbird or squirrel to the majestic and rarely seen, it's both amazing and wonderful to me that there's this special place where any of them can wind up during their greatest time of need. Once I got a little more exposed to BRWC and witnessed the incredible talent and dedication of the staff and volunteers there, I knew I had to help in some way. John and I spend most of our time building, maintaining, enhancing and enriching the homes and habitats of Ambassador animals and recovering patients. We are so proud and honored to be able to directly and tangibly support the efforts of everyone associated with BRWC and the critical work being done 365 days a year to keep our wildlife population going strong and thriving in Virginia.

*Thank you John and Kevin for all you do for our native wildlife!*



Volunteers John Clark (L) and Kevin Martin (R) repaired the screening on our avian nursery porch area in addition to many other important projects.

# Rehab + Corner

By Jessica Andersen

## Squirrel Special

Fall means migration, cooler weather, and “second season” squirrels!

Squirrels in our area have two distinct baby seasons—one in January-March, and another in July-September. That means while most of our other babies are winding down, fall brings new babies in the form of second-wave squirrels that have blown out of nests, been caught by cats, or are suffering from other issues. We’ve had a few interesting squirrel cases during this second wave!

One squirrel we received came to us after being found alone on hot pavement in a parking lot. The pavement was so hot that it burnt the pads on all four of the squirrel’s feet. With treatment, we were able to heal these burns and raise this baby to release with no other issues—you’d never know the trauma she had gone through watching her climb up a tree and out into the wild!

Another baby was brought to us after a suspected cat attack, with punctures along



This Eastern Gray Squirrel was found down on hot pavement which caused burn injuries to her foot pads. Photo by Dr. Jen Riley



Eastern Gray Squirrel exhibiting flail chest.

Photo by Dr. Jen Riley

his skull as well as broken ribs, which caused a condition known as “flail chest.” This occurs when the ribs break in two places creating a section of ribs that appear to sink inward as the chest expands, making their chest look like it’s “flailing” instead of expanding and contracting evenly. This squirrel had a very guarded prognosis—not only is being attacked by a cat generally a poor prognosis for many animals, but the flail-chest condition meant he couldn’t breathe comfortably without supplemental oxygen for the first few days. Syringe feeding (see above) was tumultuous, as his likelihood of aspiration was even higher with these combined issues. Nevertheless, despite the odds and with a tireless group of staff and volunteers tending to his many needs, he recovered fully and was able to be moved into an enclosure of other squirrels to socialize and prepare for eventual release!

Many view squirrels as cute, woodland creatures, but to others, they are considered an unwanted pest species. This adult squirrel came to us after it was found down with a bloody wound on her back.



This Eastern Gray Squirrel was shot, leaving her young orphaned. Photo by Dr. Jen Riley

Upon exam, our veterinary team found that this squirrel had been shot. Unfortunately, the pellets had done severe damage to the lungs and spine, and the squirrel had to be euthanized. This was an especially sad case as this adult female was lactating and likely left behind orphaned babies, too young to be on their own. Shooting an adult female during baby season, even if the shot animal died instantaneously, is NOT humane for the orphaned young who will likely die slow, agonizing deaths if not found.



**Eastern Gray Squirrel with ringworm, a fungal disease that affects the skin.** Photo by Dr. Jen Riley

Lastly, a young squirrel was caught and brought to us with patches of missing fur and thickened, scabby skin. While many finders panic about mange in our mammal species, our diagnostics detected NO mange and instead—Ringworm! This squirrel is now feeling much better, gaining weight and eating on his own, and his fur has now regrown in the areas where the skin had previously been bare. Ringworm is an extremely common fungal infection (not a worm at all!) that can cause loss of fur and other issues. This squirrel is on track to make a full recovery and will be releasable in the coming weeks!

BRWC is dependent on your donations to help us care for so many patients. The Center does not receive state or federal funding for wildlife rehabilitation. We are so thankful to those who have generously made it possible for us to help with so many animal emergencies!

## Copperhead!



We care for all native creatures, whether they're venomous or not! This Eastern Copperhead was found stuck in mesh netting by a landscaper, and thankfully the homeowner was kind enough to save this snake, instead of killing it out of misunderstood fear. Thanks to the finder and the amazing officers at Loudoun County Animal Services, this snake was safely contained and transported to us, where we were able to remove the netting that would have undoubtedly caused an agonizing death.

With no serious injuries, subcutaneous fluids were administered to correct the mild dehydration and this snake was sent back with the rescuing officer to be released at its found location. Big thanks to the homeowner for not only showing compassion for an animal that is often unfairly persecuted, but also allowing it to return to its home to continue managing rodent populations and helping to control the spread of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases in our area! Photo by Dr. Jen Riley

## Not All “Mangy” Foxes Have Mange

You walk out your front door and, to your surprise, see what looks to be a fox trotting away from you into the woods. You notice the fox is missing a bit of fur at the base of the tail, or is looking a little patchier than usual, and your mind immediately says MANGE! You start googling how to treat mange, where to find a trap, and (hopefully) contacting rehabilitators. But is trapping really necessary? And is it truly mange?

Surprisingly, within days of each other, we received TWO red foxes, both of which were trapped and brought to us due to a concern for “mange”. While both foxes had some degree of fur loss, neither fox was of poor body condition or had any other injuries or issues. Our vet team conducted

skin scrapes and other diagnostics on both of the foxes, and surprise—no mange! In fact, neither of these foxes had the classic signs of mange at all. They had no itching, nor reddening/cracking/thickening of skin. So what was causing this fur loss?

Both foxes had mild cases of fleas and both had some level of shedding which is expected given the time of year, but neither fox had any issues for which our staff would have advised being trapped and treated. While shedding and growing in a coat more appropriate for the next season, foxes (and many other species) may look “patchier” than usual as their old coat sheds out and their new fur grows in. Both foxes were released shortly after

intake as they had no reason to be at our hospital in the first place.

Call before you trap! Neither of these foxes needed treatment and the extreme stress of trapping and transporting is not benign. These animals were both highly stressed and in one case had minor wounds from the trapping. In addition to their stress, the humans who went out of their way to buy/borrow traps and make arrangement for trapping and transporting put in a great deal of unnecessary effort themselves. We always advise you call us or your local rehabilitators BEFORE trapping, to make absolutely sure these animals require care, as the stress of being trapped and potentially relocated comes with a far worse prognosis than a mild case of fleas!

Trapping for treatment should only ever be done as a last resort, under the guidance of a permitted rehabilitator or game warden to save that animal's life! If you find wildlife in need, please call a professional.

*Photo by Jessica Andersen.* ■



This Red Fox went through the stress of trapping and transporting for no reason—it had a thinning coat, which is normal for the time of year, and no medical issues and was quickly released. *Photo by Dr. Jen Riley.*

# Meet Scuter!

## Our Newest Wildlife Ambassador



You all voted with your donations and the winning name for our newest wildlife ambassador is **Scuter**, the **Northern Diamond-backed Terrapin**. The name is a nod to the unique patterning of her scutes, the bony plates on a turtle's shell.

Scuter came to us as a surrendered pet. Collecting these turtles from the wild and keeping them as pets is **NOT LEGAL** in our state. Their population along our eastern shore was decimated in the early 1900s due to demand for the turtles as a food item. Now, with continued habitat loss, deaths caused by car and boat collisions, and crab trap-caused drownings, terrapin populations are still struggling in Virginia.

We hope all of you will have the chance to meet Scuter soon. To get early notifications about events at the Center and more, please remember to sign up for our text notification service (see our website for details).

# Educational Opportunities

## A Walk on the Wild Side

We are happy to announce the limited opening of our Wildlife Walk, the small nature trail and Ambassador housing area that has been in the works since we moved into our building in 2016. Tours of ten people have been scheduled for Fridays and Sundays since mid-September and will likely continue through the Fall. Guests are given a staff-led tour of the Walk, getting introduced to the Wildlife Ambassadors who live outside, as well as a mix of our turtle Ambassadors who spend fair-weather days in the Turtle Pond.

For more information and dates, please visit our Facebook page. Members of our new text-notification service will receive advance notice of new dates before they are made available to the general public, so sign up with us today!



BRWC's Education Manager, Jennifer Burghoffer, leads a tour of the Wildlife Walk. *Photo by Jessica Andersen.*

## It Takes a Village

Despite the on-going health crisis, United Way Day of Caring worked hard to provide safe opportunities for local companies to give back to the community, and BRWC was thrilled to be a part of it. A small team from Trex in Winchester, Virginia came out to help with some much-needed work in our Wildlife Walk area. The group pulled all of the inva-

sive stilt grass from our plant beds, fully-graveled our Arctic Fox, Snow's enclosure, and cleaned our Turtle Pond of algae. Even though the group was small, with their help, we accomplished several weeks' worth of projects in a single day. Thank you United Way! ■

*Photos by Jennifer Burghoffer.*



# Fall Interns!

While summer is generally our busiest time of year, fall is still an excellent opportunity for teaching budding Wildlife Rehabilitators and veterinary professionals. As a wildlife teaching hospital, a large part of our mission is teaching the next generation of wildlife professionals and this past fall, we've had a few dedicated students here to learn about wildlife rehabilitation and medicine.

**Kobe Campbell,**  
East Stroudsburg University,  
Pennsylvania



Kobe Campbell is a current student at East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania, with graduation this December. Kobe is using his internship as further credit to get his degree in Environmental Studies, and hopes to pursue a career as a wildlife biologist, zoologist, or other career involving working with wildlife. This internship will give him hands-on experience and education on the natural history of our native wildlife, which will help him with his future career goals!



**Cameron Hogue,**  
Bel Rea Institute of Veterinary  
Technology, Colorado



Cameron Hogue is a Veterinary Technology student at the Bel Rea Institute of Veterinary Technology in Colorado. She applied and was accepted to intern with us as part of her required practicum hours for the fall semester before she graduates this winter. Here she will learn from our own Licensed Veterinary Technician and Veterinarian about different treatments, handling techniques, and overall learn more about wildlife medicine to help her in her future career as a licensed Vet Tech!

**Cara Costanzo,**  
Virginia-Maryland College of  
Veterinary Medicine

Cara Costanzo is a veterinary student in her final year of study at Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. She chose to do a clinical rotation at the Center due to her interests in wildlife, research, and public health. We hope that everything she learned here will benefit her in her future career as a veterinarian and that it will benefit us all through public health!

**Sarah Midolo,**  
Rehabilitation Intern



Sarah Midolo is a graduate of Elon University with a degree in Environmental and Ecological Science with a minor in Biology. With the onset of the pandemic, Sarah decided to take a break between her undergrad and graduate school to work and further investigate the career paths available in different fields—like wildlife rehabilitation! She is hoping to research zoology or wildlife ecology in the future. ■



**Blue Ridge Wildlife Center  
Combined Federal Campaign  
CFC# 54098**

## Interested in an Educational Opportunity with BRWC?

If you or someone you know is interested in an educational opportunity like this, please see our website at: [blueridgewildlifectr.org/new-volunteer](http://blueridgewildlifectr.org/new-volunteer).

## Help with Housing Interns

If you are interested in housing any out-of-state interns in the future, when it is safe to do so, please reach out to us at [info@blueridgewildlifectr.org](mailto:info@blueridgewildlifectr.org).

# Puzzle This

Test your knowledge of the topics presented in this issue of *The Ridgeline*. All answers can be found within its pages.

## Across

**3.** Outdoor cats cause the deaths of \_\_\_\_\_ of birds in the U.S. each year. Please keep your cats indoors to protect them and wildlife.

**6.** Call before you \_\_\_\_\_! Unnecessary trapping and relocation of wildlife can do more harm than good.

**7.** The large bags of “wild bird seed” sold in stores may not have well-balanced \_\_\_\_\_ for wildlife.

**9.** Planting \_\_\_\_\_ species of plants and leaving leaf litter helps support bird populations by providing habitat and food sources.

**10.** Reduce waste by replacing single-use plastic bags with this alternative. Plastic bags and other single-use plastics can be ingested by birds or cause them other harm.

**12.** This skin condition is actually a fungal infection, despite what the name suggests.

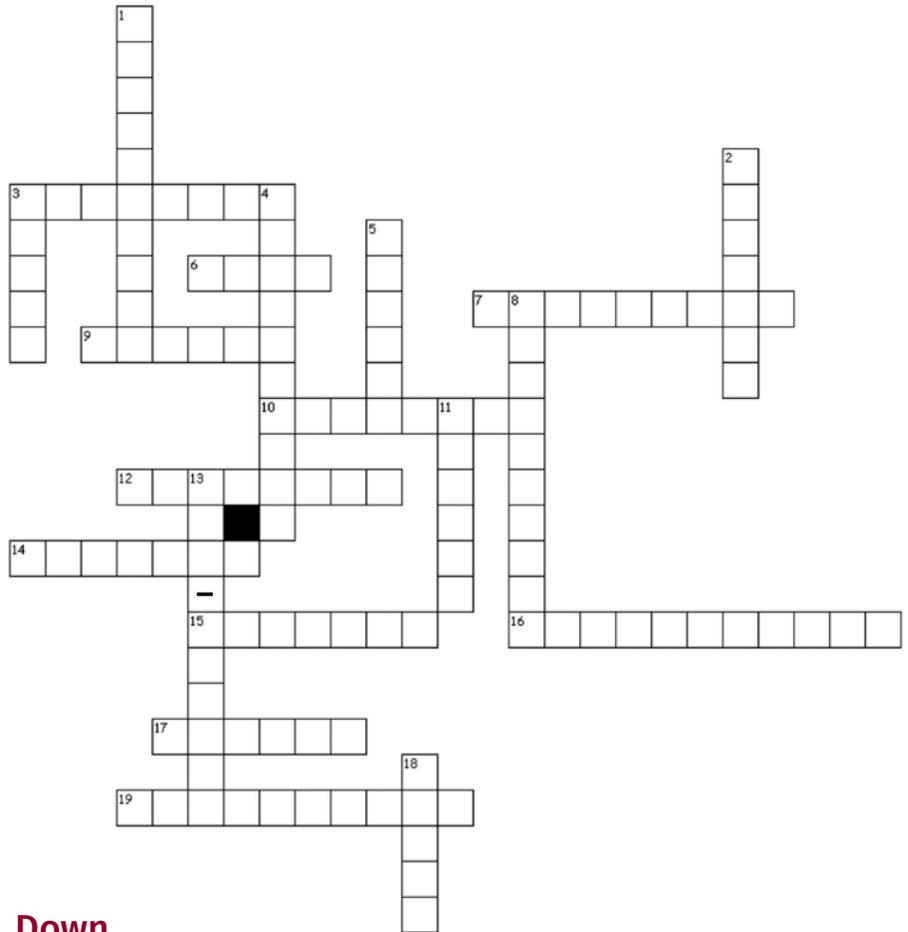
**14.** Close contact combined with poor \_\_\_\_\_ can lead to several diseases living on backyard bird feeders.

**15.** These are a sign of *Trichomoniasis*, a parasite that affects doves and finches, and their predators. Thickening can prevent feeding and lead to starvation.

**16.** Most feeders should be cleaned completely every two weeks except feeders for these birds, which should be cleaned every three days.

**17.** BRWC has admitted \_\_\_\_\_ the number of patients suffering from “feeder diseases” this year.

**19.** Reduce the use of this substance around your home: these poisons can travel up the food chain and cause direct mortality of birds.



## Down

**1.** Over 30% of finches admitted this year had this common feeder disease: \_\_\_\_\_ *gallisepticum*.

**2.** Squirrels have two separate baby \_\_\_\_\_: spring and fall.

**3.** *Mycoplasma* causes finches to be \_\_\_\_\_ temporarily due to swollen and crusted eyes.

**4.** Coffee can be farmed this way to make it more bird friendly. Look for the label! (two words).

**5.** Remember to use \_\_\_\_\_ when cleaning feeders or handling potentially sick birds. Your protection is important!

**8.** You should also remember to clean \_\_\_\_\_ the feeders to prevent birds from eating old, potentially spoiled seed.

**11.** After removing organic material with soap and water, feeders should be cleaned with a 10% \_\_\_\_\_ solution and set for 10 minutes to fully disinfect.

**13.** It is recommended that feeders be made from this kind of material (hyph.).

**18.** Finch patients being treated for *Mycoplasma* must spend a minimum of three \_\_\_\_\_ in care.

**ACROSS:** 3. billions; 6. trap; 7. nutrition; 9. native; 10. reusable; 12. ringworm; 14. hygiene; 15. plaques; 16. hummingbird; 17. double; 19. pesticides

**DOWN:** 1. mycoplasma; 2. seasons; 3. blind; 4. shadegrown; 5. gloves; 8. underneath; 11. bleach; 13. non-porous; 18. weeks



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# Stay Informed!

Become a BRWC Member to continue receiving our quarterly newsletter, *The Ridgeline*.

Visit [blueridgewildlifectr.org](http://blueridgewildlifectr.org) and click on *The Ridgeline* tab to view member benefits and get started.

Or you can mail a check payable to Blue Ridge Wildlife Center at 106 Island Farm lane, Boyce, Virginia 22620



TAIL END