



Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC)

www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org and on Facebook

Vol. 65, No. 5

May/June 2017

May 11 Meeting

6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program
at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

Film and Discussion on Birds in New York City's Central Park

By Shawn Dash

At the May meeting we are going to try and view the documentary "Birders: The Central Park Effect". This lovely film follows a group of New York birders as they trek across Central Park looking for the nearly 200 species found in this park. The documentary, which is more than just a cinematic view of a few birding enthusiasts, highlights elements of the importance of conservation, changing landscapes, and the need for green places. Gwen Harris suggested this film for the club, so come and enjoy a movie night with the HRBC. An old trailer for the film can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH1IOiMZmDQ>

Hosted by Bill Ferris, Dave Youker and Keith Frigo



Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Leclerc, 18th cent)

June 3 Annual Picnic

7:00 AM Bird walk Noon Meal
at Newport News Park

By Wendy Maxey

This year, the HRBC's annual picnic will be held Saturday, June 3 at noon, in picnic shelter #3 in Newport News Park. Shelter #3 is located near the parking lot behind the Ranger Station (used for our twice-a-month bird walks) and is quite close to the water. It is recommended that you bring chairs for additional seating.

Our morning bird walk will be led by Andy Hawkins and will begin at 7:00 AM to allow for birding before the heat of the day. You are welcome to join the group whenever you arrive, so come early and work up an appetite. The picnic will begin around noon, and the club will provide everything for the burgers and hotdogs. A sign-up sheet will be out at the May meeting, so we can get a head count for the number of burgers and hotdogs needed. Please bring a dish to share (appetizer, side dish or desert) and join all the fun! Please call or e-mail if you are planning on joining us and are unable to sign up at the May meeting. Following the picnic, the new club officers will be announced. Please come out to celebrate the end of another great year and see everyone one last time before the summer break.

The **picnic planning committee** will meet Tuesday, May 23 at 1:00 PM at Jane Frigo's house (114 Deep Water Cove, Newport News). If you are willing to help with planning, set up or clean up please call Wendy Maxey (483-3003 or emaxey@verizon.net) or Jane Frigo (873-0721 or birderjane@gmail.com)

HRBC Outdoors May/June

Regular bird walks in Newport News Park

First and third Sundays of *every* month, 7:00 AM
Meet in big parking lot behind the Ranger Station.
Jane Frigo birderjane@gmail.com 757-873-0721

Field Trip to Harrison Hatchery (this page)

Saturday, 7:00 AM, May 13, 2017
Andy Hawkins andrewcurtishawkins@gmail.com
cell 757-870-9641

BioBlitz at Newport News Park (this page)

Saturday-Sunday, May 20-21, 2017
Bryan Barmore gbheron25@gmail.com

Pre-picnic bird walk at NN Park (see page 1)

Saturday, 7:00 AM, June 3, 2017
Andy Hawkins andrewcurtishawkins@gmail.com
cell 757-870-9641

Field Trip to Lake Harrison National Fish Hatchery

Saturday, 7:00 AM, May 13, 2017

By Andy Hawkins



Photo by USFWS

On May 13, we will try a spot we have not been for a while, Lake Harrison National Fish Hatchery, operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The possibility exists for a lot of our summer breeders such as various flycatchers, vireos, swallows, warblers, thrushes, and orioles. Also, a shorebird or two might show up on some of the ponds.

This excursion will meet at our usual twice-a-month bird walk parking lot (behind the Ranger Station at Newport News Park) at 7:00 AM, leaving by 7:15 AM and carpooling up Rt. 5 to the Hatchery. There is no charge, but you can sign up at the

monthly meeting or email me at andrewcurtishawkins@gmail.com. Depending on time and conditions, some might choose to continue on to Dutch Gap finishing in the early afternoon. For questions email me at the above address or call at [757-870-9641](tel:757-870-9641). I would bring bug spray and suntan lotion.

BioBlitz at Newport News Park

May 20-21, 2017

By Bryan Barmore

The Virginia Herpetological Society <http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/>, HRBC, and other Virginia Peninsula nature-focused organizations will be conducting a BioBlitz in Newport News Park on the weekend of May 20-21, 2017, rain or shine. This 7,711 acre urban oasis features 30 miles of trails through lush woodlands, meadows, as well as the Grafton Ponds Natural Area Preserve <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/natural-area-preserves/grafton>, a 375-acre complex of vernal pools. More information can be found at <https://sites.google.com/a/vaherpsociety.com/nnp-bioblitz-2017/>

The goal of the bioblitz is to identify as many species within the park as possible to get a sense of the park's biodiversity. For birds, we plan to divide the greater park area into sectors and send teams of 3-5 out to each sector; kind of like a mini Christmas Bird Count. We can use people of all skill levels on the teams. We are also looking at a few night focused surveys.

If you are interested, please visit the bioblitz page at <https://sites.google.com/a/vaherpsociety.com/nnp-bioblitz-2017/> for more information and to register. If you wish to be part of a specific party or bird a specific area of the park, are familiar with iNaturalist (where all species will be recorded), or a photographer (we would like as many photographs of species as possible), please note that in the comment section as you register.

Questions on Bioblitz or additional ideas can be sent to Bryan Barmore gbheron25@gmail.com. Thanks and hope to see you out there.

Birders Needed!

By Dave Youker

Virginia is in its second year of a 5-year Breeding Bird Atlas. For those who participated last year, thanks for making that first year a big success! Again, for those who contributed last year, you should have finished up any residual work in your block...and it's time to sign-up for new blocks. The focus for 2017 remains on the Priority Blocks. Many of you wanted to get experience last year by working in your local blocks, but it's time to branch out to new territory. Each block now has the list of species from the first Atlas, so you can see what species were seen and confirmed. It's a great tool to compare the changes in your particular blocks.

If you didn't participate last year, this is the perfect time to volunteer some of your time. You'll learn a lot about breeding bird behavior. Don't feel like you have the skills to participate? There is plenty of help. Training is available in many forms, both online and in person. You can also atlas with other birders.

Many birds are already exhibiting breeding behavior, and the activity will really pick-up over the next two months. The last of our winter residents will be leaving us, and our summer birds will be here eager to set-up territories. It's a great time to be out in the field witnessing this breeding behavior.

If you have any questions or need training in "atlasing", don't hesitate to contact me, Dave Youker, the Region 11 Coordinator, Youkerd@aol.com.

(Even More) Birders Needed!



This article is about work. No work, no club. On the end sheet of this newsletter, the people holding slots for the bulk of HRBC's volunteer tasks are listed.

Our President (P) is also effectively functioning as Vice President – the wrangler of presentations for monthly meetings. The same fellow has a full-time job at a name U.S. university as Assistant Professor, which is one of the most stressful and time consuming occupations on the planet. A woman further down the roster has taken on the unlisted role of guiding, twice a month in all weathers, bird walks for club members, tourists, naturalists and students; she's a former P. Our most recent former P, marked inconspicuously as a "Board" member, has two articles in this edition that reveal his continuing contributions to local birding. Another former P, Meredith Bell, has spent an entire decade as our Web Editor and finally wishes to relinquish the post.

The people above have all rendered significantly more service to HRBC than have Most of the Rest of Us Members (MRUM), including Yours Truly. What happens to the club when they go away or burn out? MRUM must step up. The list of positions and current volunteers for the next year follows. No nominations are contested at present, but if they are during the next week, we can vote at the meeting on May 11. Brace yourself, make inquiries, and consider to serve a stint with the club.

Shawn Dash is willing to continue as President. Pete Peterman has accepted a call to be nominated for the Vice President. Bill Boeh can remain as Secretary; he also leads our bird counts in spare moments. Treasurer John Adair, who brought HRBC into compliance with federal rules, can continue to serve. Pete Peterman's 3-year run on the Board expires in June of this year, and Walter Harris is okay to fill the opening. Jason Strickland and Andy Hawkins (also on the Board) are both able to remain as Field Trip Coordinators.

We are fortunate that Ellis and Wendy Maxey are willing to assume the job that Meredith has done as Web Editor. Dianne Snyder can takeover Hospitality, provided that she gets us helpers each month to bring refreshments to meetings. Your Newsletter Editor can continue next year (but please, someone else come along and take it later or sooner). Jessica Ausura, who first put us on Facebook, is stepping down from Publicity. Katrina Weber is considering to replace her. Because of professional commitments, both Jessica and Katrina have been unable to attend most regular meetings of HRBC. Gwen Harris can keep up Membership.

Wood Duck Monitoring

By Dave Youker

As many of you are aware, I've been monitoring Prothonotary Warbler boxes at Newport News Park and Harwoods Mill reservoir. And I've enjoyed a fair amount of success since it all began in 2009. But I've also been monitoring seven Wood Duck boxes at Harwoods Mill since 2012. I had noticed some old boxes affixed to trees that were occupied by squirrels. So I contacted Newport News Parks & Recreation and requested permission to monitor Wood Duck nesting at the reservoir. I constructed new boxes and hung them on poles, then waited patiently. For three years, nothing! Well almost nothing. I did have a Carolina Wren, Prothonotary Warbler and Eastern Bluebird nest in the boxes. There also were the battles with the wasps and an occasional flying squirrel.



Photo by Dave Youker

Finally, in 2015, I fledged 19 Wood Ducks from 2 boxes. Many people told me that Wood Ducks don't use these boxes, and I had almost conceded defeat. So over that winter I dutifully cleaned the boxes and hoped for similar success in 2016. Well last year I had Wood Ducks in 6 of the 7 boxes and fledged 67 ducks!

Wood Ducks are precocial, meaning they must feed on their own soon after hatching. Anyone having seen one of the documentaries on Wood Ducks knows that they all hatch roughly the same time and leave the nest as soon as they are dry. You have to be lucky to catch them the moment they emerge from the nest. If you're not that lucky, you count the remaining eggs to determine the number of fledged ducks.



Photo by Dave Youker

It was truly amazing going from 19 to 67 Wood Ducks and having an occupancy rate of 86%. I felt like I had made a conservation contribution, even if I couldn't replicate that success again. Well, as of my check on 12 April, there are again 6 of 7 boxes occupied with a total of 97 eggs! I should know how many fledged by the end of April and will provide an update at our next meeting.

Report of Field Trip on 4/15/17 to Washington/Jericho Ditch of the Great Dismal Swamp

By Andy Hawkins

Fifteen of us, including a couple visitors from Norfolk, took a spring walk along the Washington Ditch on April 15. The highlight of the trip has to be the warblers passing through and getting ready to breed. Eleven warblers were spotted including ovenbirds, prothonotaries, Swainson's (a great spring bird), common yellowthroats, yellow-throated, hooded, pine, yellow-rumped, Louisiana Waterthrush, redstarts and later at Jericho, prairie. A good group of birders, a good morning and good group of birds. Twenty six species in all, which is not a lot, but indeed a good selection of warblers - and that's why we went.





L'Aigrette rousse (Leclerc, 18th cent.)

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To join the Hampton Roads Bird Club, please fill out the form below and bring it along with your check (payable to Hampton Roads Bird Club) to the next meeting or mail to: **John Adair, 109 Nansemond Turn, Yorktown, Virginia 23693**. Membership is from September 1st to August 31st. **Dues are \$15.00 for individuals and \$20.00 for families.** NOTE: Membership dues can be paid at Wild Wings Nature Store in the Glendale Shopping Center in Newport News, or at Wild Birds on Kiln Creek Parkway in Yorktown. Meetings are held at the Sandy Bottom Nature Park, 1255 Big Bethel Road, Hampton, VA, on the second Thursday of the month, September through May, at 6:30 PM.

Hampton Roads Bird Club – Membership Form

Renewal _____ New Member _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Check this box to receive newsletter via email/website instead of hard copy by mail.

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