



# Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

**Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC)**

[www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org](http://www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org) and on Facebook

---

Vol. 74, No. 3

January-February 2026

---

**Thursday, Jan. 8 Meeting**  
**6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program**  
Sandy Bottom Nature Park

**Birds of the Pacific Northwest**  
By James Abbott

**Thursday, Feb. 12 Meeting**  
**6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program**  
Sandy Bottom Nature Park

**Birding by Jose Hernandez**



Blackburnian Warbler  
By Dianne Snyder (May 2025 in Ohio)

## HRBC Outdoors

**Regular Bird Walks in Newport News Park**  
7:00 AM on 1st and 3rd Sundays of all 12 months but not for the 1st Sunday of March.  
Meet at big parking lot behind Ranger Station.  
Leader: Jane Frigo [birderjane@gmail.com](mailto:birderjane@gmail.com)  
home 757-873-0721, cell 757-776-7925

**Field Trip to Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel**  
Saturday, January 24, 2026  
Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)  
757-320-9191 (text or phone)

**Pelagic Trip from Rudee Inlet or Hatteras**  
February or March 2026?  
Club will decide on location; cost ~ \$220  
Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)  
757-320-9191 (text or phone)

**Field Trip to Grandview Beach**  
Saturday, February 7?, 2026 If no other for the month.  
Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)  
757-320-9191 (text or phone)

**Field Trip destination TBD**  
Sunday, March 15? or 22?, 2026  
Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)  
757-320-9191 (text or phone)

**Field Trip to Back Bay NWR**  
Saturday, April 25, 2026  
Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)  
757-320-9191 (text or phone)

**Field Trip to western Virginia mountains**  
Late May 2026  
Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)  
757-320-9191 (text or phone)

## **Birding Optics 101 from HRBC's Vice President**

Mark Sopko gave an excellent presentation on birding optics at Sandy Bottom on November 13, 2025. His purpose-built and effective Galilean refractor was passed around for examination; it was a 1-foot by 4-foot plank into which two holes had been drilled, with hand-held lenses suspended from the holes. Two spotting scopes were shown, as well as many binoculars, including an antique. A dissected binocular mounted on a board was on display. Binoculars use prisms and lenses. Porro and roof prism binoculars were shown, and their originators identified. It was quite a show.

Convex and concave glass shapes were explained, and the purpose of doublet and triplet scopes to correct chromatic aberration. Special types of ED (Extra low Dispersion) glass like Bk7 (not as clear as Bak4) and Sk15 are used in high-end optics like Zeiss. As glass reflects, as well as transmits and bends light, coatings to lenses and prisms are employed to improve the image by reducing stray light. Mark said it's okay to use saliva, which is free, to reduce fogging of the lenses. But never use Windex or detergent on them, as that can spoil the lens coatings.

Objective (the 42 mm of the big lens diameter in 8x42 binoculars), magnification (the power 8 in 8x42), field of view (FOV), collimation, eye relief, exit pupil, anti-fog, depth of field, and up-close focus were quickly defined. The human FOV is over 200 degrees; binocular FOV is only a few degrees, and it's even less for a birding telescope.

What to look for when you buy optics? First a sharp image, easy and quick focus, and a wide field of view (FOV). For a given quality of optics (i.e., two binocs from the same company of almost the same price and objective size, like 8x42 and 10x42), the wider FOV (from 8x42) will make it easier

to find the bird, but a larger magnification (from 10x42) will give a bigger and slightly brighter image with more color; less magnification means more FOV. For purchase also consider your wallet, comfort, usability in the field, car, and travel. The high-end optics include Zeiss, Leica, Swarovski, and even some of the pricier Vortex. An Audubon web site may help with comparing various price ranges of optics. Some of the latest optics use AI to identify species.

Eye-glass wearers should attend to the numerical value of eye relief (ER) when buying optics. ER is the distance to which you must bring the glass eyepiece to the live eyeball, to get the full FOV. Birders with eye-glasses may need ER of 15 mm to 18 mm. Those not needing eyeglasses can see the full FOV with inexpensive optics having ER as small as 5 mm (~1/5 inch). You're getting the full FOV with optics if you see a dark and perfectly focused circular porthole border surrounding the image. Those not wearing eyeglasses can enjoy an even better view if they have optics with large ER by extending the eyecups; the extension shuts out more stray light.

## **Treasurer's Report of HRBC Holiday Party on December 11, 2025**

By John Adair

It appeared that everyone enjoyed themselves with the festive atmosphere and friendly auction bidding on the MANY generous donations so colorful and well organized. There were delicious appetizers, dinner and dessert selections; welcoming table decorations; pleasant holiday music from all 4 corners all made the evening so nice.

Congratulations and many thank you-s to Jeannie and Harold Atkins, Brenda and C.L. Tanner, and Jane Frigo for all the time and

effort required to provide such an enjoyable event for 34 club members.

Highlights included a bidding contest between Jane Frigo and Elaine Sopko over a beautiful bluebird watercolor painting; and of course Charm Peterman's fudge and specially molded cookies. Fine hams were brought by Jane Frigo and Gwen Harris, while Wendy Maxey provided an excellent chicken pot pie.

Treasurer's Report (pending bank deposit):

Cash for books and bids	\$219
Checks for bids	\$440
Total income	\$659

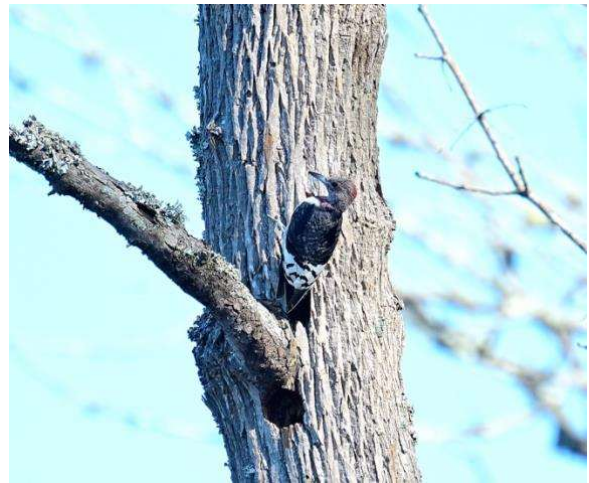
## Winter Photo Contest Winners

By Michael Meyer



Snow Bunting  
Gold by William McKellar

William: "One evening I was out at Kiptopeke State Park talking to another birder when I suddenly spotted a relatively small bird fly solo over the fishing pier. I thought to myself that it might be the Snow Bunting that was reported there prior to my arrival. When it landed seconds later on the pier, I was thrilled to see that it was the adorable Snow Bunting and additionally it gave awesome looks."



Red-headed Woodpecker (immature)  
Silver by Pete Peterman

Pete: "The first one is from our bird walk at NN Park on Sunday, 2 Nov, the immature Red-headed WP. Happy to see a Red-head again!"



Northern Flicker  
Bronze by Lynn Chandler

Lynn: "The Northern Flicker (yellow shafted) has been in my neighborhood for several months and I have heard him calling often. Finally got a photo of him on Saturday, November 29th @ 3pm in a tree in my backyard!"



Clay-colored Sparrow  
Honorable Mention by William McKellar

William: "I set out one morning to search for several different species of rare sparrows at the Piggly Wiggly Retention Pond. To my surprise, I found all 3, the Lincoln's & the Grasshopper but the highlight was this Clay-colored Sparrow who was very cooperative and briefly came out in the open on 2 occasions."

Here are the photo contest rules:

A member may submit up to 2 photos each month taken in the last 60 days.

Please name each file with the photographer and the bird's name (i.e., ShawnDash\_Osprey).

Submit to Michael Meyer ([michael.meyer@cnu.edu](mailto:michael.meyer@cnu.edu)) by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Winners will be contacted by the newsletter editor to provide either a short writeup or a brief phone interview from which a narrative may be composed.

## HRBC Walks in Newport News Park and Field Trips

By Jane Frigo, Bill Boeh, Mark Sopko, and James Abbott

This has links to eBird reports for 2025 events. The link for the November 22 field trip to Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve has photos by Mark Sopko.

Date	Location	eBird Report Link
Oct 19	NN Park	<a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/429207">https://ebird.org/tripreport/429207</a>
Nov 2	NN Park	<a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/429206">https://ebird.org/tripreport/429206</a>
Nov 16	NN Park	<a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/433011">https://ebird.org/tripreport/433011</a>
Nov 22	Hoffler Creek	<a href="https://ebird.org/checklist/S287075059">https://ebird.org/checklist/S287075059</a>
Dec 7	NN Park	<a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/439594">https://ebird.org/tripreport/439594</a>
Dec 21	NN Park	<a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/439594">https://ebird.org/tripreport/439594</a>

## Tree Swallow Reproduction OK even with PFAS – A Surprise

There are over 15,000 PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl) chemicals. PFAS are highly persistent and widely used in firefighter training and in consumer products. Long term exposure to some has been linked to a variety of woeful human diseases including testicular cancer. Scientists have found surprising reproductive success in Tree Swallows at more than dozen sites where the birds have high exposure (tissue and diet) to PFAS because of proximity to military installations and the urban areas where PFAS were produced.

Oxford University Press USA. "Scientists shocked as birds soaked in "forever chemicals" still thrive.". ScienceDaily, 9 October 2025.

[www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2025/10/251008030936.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2025/10/251008030936.htm)

President	Shawn Dash	<a href="mailto:drshawntdash@gmail.com">drshawntdash@gmail.com</a>	915-491-6227
Vice President	Mark Sopko	<a href="mailto:mgsopsopko@gmail.com">mgsopsopko@gmail.com</a>	804-815-2897
Secretary	William Boeh	<a href="mailto:phrogdolph@gmail.com">phrogdolph@gmail.com</a>	757-951-7959
Treasurer	John Adair	<a href="mailto:adairjj@gmail.com">adairjj@gmail.com</a>	757-224-8920
Board (7/22-6/28)	Michael Meyer	<a href="mailto:michael.meyer@cnu.edu">michael.meyer@cnu.edu</a>	757-303-4790
Board (7/23-6/26)	Pete Peterman.	<a href="mailto:rwpeterman@verizon.net">rwpeterman@verizon.net</a>	757-766-8658
Board (7/24-6/27)	Dianne Snyder.	<a href="mailto:dianne5657@cox.net">dianne5657@cox.net</a>	757-872-6747
Board (former Pres.)	Dave Youker	<a href="mailto:youkerd@aol.com">youkerd@aol.com</a>	757-344-9385
Field Trip Coordinator	James Abbott	<a href="mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com">jaa3469@gmail.com</a>	757-320-9191
Sunday Walk Leader	Jane Frigo	<a href="mailto:birderjane@gmail.com">birderjane@gmail.com</a>	757-776-7925
Web Editor	Wendy Maxey	<a href="mailto:emaxey@verizon.net">emaxey@verizon.net</a>	757-483-3003
Web Editor	Ellis Maxey	<a href="mailto:emaxey@verizon.net">emaxey@verizon.net</a>	757-483-3003
Hospitality	Brenda Tannner	<a href="mailto:brtanner@hotmail.com">brtanner@hotmail.com</a>	757-867-8407
Hospitality	Jeannie Atkins	<a href="mailto:jeannie.and.harold@icloud.com">jeannie.and.harold@icloud.com</a>	757-287-3985
Publicity	Vacant		
Newsletter Editor	Thomas Charlock	<a href="mailto:tomcharlock@gmail.com">tomcharlock@gmail.com</a>	757-746-9190
Membership	Gwen Harris	<a href="mailto:gwenkharris65@gmail.com">gwenkharris65@gmail.com</a>	757-898-8649

TO JOIN OR RENEW. If you would like to join the Hampton Roads Bird Club or renew your membership, there are several convenient ways to do so. Dues remain at \$15.00 for individuals and \$20.00 for families. New members, and anyone whose information has changed, please complete the form below and send to John Adair, HRBC Treasurer.

Submit your application and payment as follows:

- 1) Mail to: John Adair, 109 Nansemond Turn, Yorktown, VA 23693, [adairjj@gmail.com](mailto:adairjj@gmail.com).
- 2) Drop off at: Wild Wings Nature Store, Glendale Shopping Center in Newport News.
- 3) Pay by PayPal or credit card at: <https://www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org/membership>.

### Hampton Roads Bird Club – Membership Form

New Member (F/I) \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: H: \_\_\_\_\_ C: \_\_\_\_\_ W: \_\_\_\_\_ **P**

Email(s): \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Only check this box if you need the newsletter delivered via the postal system;  
 HRBC is trying to save trees and reduce club expenses by using email.

*Editor (T. Charlock)*  
*Hampton Roads Bird Club*  
*22 Executive Drive*  
*Newport News, Virginia 23606-2225*



