



Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC)

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
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
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
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
757-320-9191 (text or phone)

Field Trip destination TBD

Sunday, March 15? or 22?, 2026
Leader: James Abbott 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
757-320-9191 (text or phone)

Field Trip to western Virginia mountains

Late May 2026
Leader: James Abbott 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

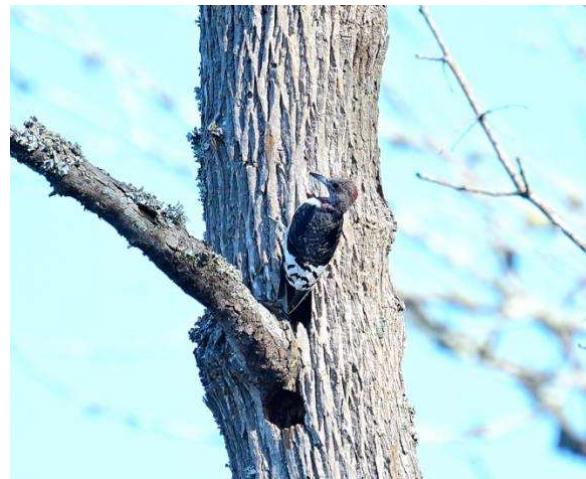
Winter Photo Contest Winners

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) by the 10th 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	https://ebird.org/tripreport/429207
Nov 2	NN Park	https://ebird.org/tripreport/429206
Nov 16	NN Park	https://ebird.org/tripreport/433011
Nov 22	Hoffler Creek	https://ebird.org/checklist/S287075059
Dec 7	NN Park	https://ebird.org/tripreport/439594
Dec 21	NN Park	https://ebird.org/tripreport/439594

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

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Board (7/24-6/27)	Dianne Snyder.	dianne5657@cox.net	757-872-6747
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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.
- 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.

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