



# Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

***Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC)***

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

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Vol. 69, No. 4

March/April 2021

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## **March 11 Meeting**

**7:00 PM using internet Zoom**

(Shawn will email link to members)

### **What Can the Timing of Tree Leafout, Flowering, and Bird Arrival and Range Shifts Tell Us About Climate Change?**

By Jason Johnston

Climate change has led to many changes in the phenology of birds as well as the plants, insects and other parts of their communities. Citizen science data collected years ago has provided an essential baseline data source to compare to contemporary observations. Dr. Johnston will share findings from two northern Maine data sets of migratory bird spring arrival originally collected by a hunting guide and a hobby birder from the 1940's and 1950's and 1969 to 2013.

Dr. Johnston is the Associate Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Maine at Presque Isle. He has conducted research on breeding wood thrush, house sparrows, hermit thrushes, northern cardinals, boreal birds, and others on topics from long-term demographics, physiological ecology, nest desertion, habitat quality, food use, and impacts of a wind turbine. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Maine in Biological Sciences. His Master's Degree is in Entomology and Applied Ecology from the University of Delaware where he met Shawn Dash. He lives on a small farm in northern Maine where they also grow hops for the craft brewing industry in Maine.

## **April 8 Meeting**

**7:00 PM using internet Zoom**

(Shawn will email link to members)

### **Sequoia, Kings Canyon and Yosemite National Parks Birds, Rocks, Trees, and Water plus San Diego Birding**

By Pete Peterman

Pete and Charm Peterman traveled to San Diego at the end of September 2020 and with Charm's sister drove to the iconic national parks in the Sierra Nevada's. The presentation shows the birds and the environment that they survive in.

Pete and Charm are members of HRBC and have birded in many parts of the US, Canada, Central and South America.



Stellar's Jay at Kings Canyon (by Pete Peterman)

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## HRBC Outdoors

Because of Covid-19, all HRBC outdoor events require minimum social distancing of 6 feet. Groups larger than 8 will be divided; this requirement can cause “first-come/first-served” circumstances. Face covering is needed and must be worn if distancing cannot be maintained. Carpooling and sharing of equipment are not allowed. Failure to comply will result in immediate cancellation of the event.

### Regular bird walks in Newport News Park

1st and 3rd Sundays all 12 months at 7:00 AM. Meet at big parking lot behind Ranger Station. Leader: Jane Frigo, home 757-873-0721, cell 757-660-3405, [birderjane@gmail.com](mailto:birderjane@gmail.com)

### Field Trip to Virginia Beach Sites (see this page)

Saturday, 8:00 AM, March 13, 2021

Leaders: Harry and Rochelle Colestock

[hcolesto@hotmail.com](mailto:hcolesto@hotmail.com)

804-840-7224 (text or phone)

### HRBC Spring Bird Count (see this page)

Saturday, 7:00 AM -- ?, April 24, 2021

Leaders for each of 13 sectors.

Organizer: Bill Boeh 757-951-7959

[dolphrog1@yahoo.com](mailto:dolphrog1@yahoo.com)



Meet in center of circle at 8:00 AM on March 13  
Virginia Beach Little Island Park

•The locations we will be visiting this trip include (1) Little Island Park beach and marsh areas, (2) Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge beaches, ponds and forested areas, and (3) an optional new area on our way home at the retention pond at Harris Teeter near the juncture of Princess Anne and Sandbridge Roads.

•Covid-19 social distancing and other health maintenance items set forth by the club will be strictly observed. See the first paragraph at the top of the column on the left.

•Anyone who goes on a waiting list for this trip and is not selected to go will have priority for the next scheduled trip, if they choose to go.

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## Field Trip to Virginia Beach Birding Sites

**8:00 AM, March 13, 2021**

By Harry and Rochelle Colestock

•Sign-up: Up to 14 members on first-come, first-serve basis. Notify us by email at [hcolesto@hotmail.com](mailto:hcolesto@hotmail.com) or text/phone at 804-840-7224. Please provide name and contact information.

•Timing: We will meet at 8:00 AM at the Little Island Park beach parking lot. This will be a lengthy trip for many of us, and the GPS seems to find a way to get us there. Our first gathering will be at the center of the circle on the following map.

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## HRBC Spring Bird Count Saturday, April 24, 2021

By Bill Boeh

The HRBC has been conducting the Spring Bird Count (SBC) since 1995. Please join us in being part of this citizen science effort to support bird conservation. It's great fun and a great way to help conserve the birds--and for new members, a great way to be introduced to some of the best birding sites in our region.

The date for this year's SBC will be Saturday, April 24. The typical sector count generally runs from 7:00 AM through most of the day, but some sectors go only for a few hours. Don't hesitate to participate because you don't feel you're proficient enough at identifying birds: sector counts are led by our more experienced birders. You can contribute by adding more eyes and ears to help detect the birds for

identification (and counting). It's a lot of fun and you'll be building your identification skills as well. Our 13 sectors are mapped on the HRBC web page at <https://www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org/bird-counts>

**Covid-19 social distancing** and other health maintenance items set forth by the club will be strictly observed; see the first paragraph at the top of the left column on the previous page. Please contact me ([dolphrog1@yahoo.com](mailto:dolphrog1@yahoo.com) or 757-951-7959) if you would like to participate and have a preferred sector. If you can't participate in a field count, feeder-watching is another way you can support this effort.

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“Cindy Schulz and I went birding at Lake Anna State Park and Cindy spotted an Eastern Screech Owl”  
(by Dianne Snyder)

## **JBLE-Langley Needs Citizen-Scientists to Help Protect both Human Life and Bald Eagles**

By Alicia Garcia, Natural Resources Program Manager, Joint Base Langley-Eustis (JBLE)

(Conveyed by Bill Boeh)

I have the privilege of serving as the project manager for a research project with the objective of preventing collisions between Bald Eagles and aircraft. During the 2021 Bald Eagle nesting season, we need to find active nests within 5 miles of Langley where landowners will be willing to allow access for state and federal biologists. I'm seeking your help in finding landowners with active nests on their property who are willing to work with us on a research project.

The recovery of the Bald Eagle within the United States is a marvelous story of success. Currently, the Chesapeake Bay area enjoys one of the densest populations of bald eagles in the world. The number of breeding pairs on the James River alone, now surpasses the original breeding population recovery goal set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1990 for the Chesapeake Bay area.

While our local area is home to an abundance of wildlife including the Bald Eagle, it is also home to many military installations and airfields. This duality of use can create conflicts between humans and wildlife. As anyone who can remember the “Miracle on the Hudson” knows, birds can be very dangerous to aircraft when their paths collide. Conversely, collisions between birds and aircraft are also generally fatal to birds. As Bald Eagle populations have steadily climbed, the potential for negative interactions between aircraft and eagles has also increased. Joint Base Langley Eustis (JBLE)-Langley recognizes this challenge and is working to proactively prevent conflict between aircraft and birds.

Accordingly, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR), JBLE-Langley, and Conservation Science Global (CSG) have teamed up to develop better techniques for keeping wildlife away from airfields and out of harm's way. CSG is a 501 c (3) non-profit founded to advance

conservation and management of natural resources. This group is working with JBLE-Langley and is conducting an ongoing study examining Bald Eagle behavior and the eagle-aircraft strike hazard in Virginia in cooperation with the VDWR (find out more at [www.consciglobal.org](http://www.consciglobal.org)).

Once we locate a nest, we will attempt to band the nestlings. The birds may also be fitted with small tracking devices. The birds will be released immediately following banding and/or outfitting with tracking devices.

The purpose of our research is to prevent mishaps by developing better methods for managing this species in and around airfield environments. We are seeking younger birds to band because previous research has taught us that young eagles are naive to the danger an airfield can present to them. Young eagles are found hunting or loafing on airfields more frequently than older birds. Additionally, their unrefined hunting skills and ignorance of the danger presented by an aircraft, causes them to fly into the paths of aircrafts more frequently than older birds. If they fly into the path of an aircraft, not only can they be grievously injured, but they are large enough to cause serious injury to the pilot and flight crew.

The hope is that some of the banded and/or tagged birds will end up wandering onto Langley airfield. We can then track and evaluate movement responses to our hazing tactics, which are designed to discourage them from remaining on the airfield. We think many birds will habituate to these tactics and just move to the other side of the airfield. If we find that to be the case, we will need to revise some of our tactics. If it is not the case, and we are seeing separate individual birds on the other side of the airfield in the same general timeframe, that means we have a different challenge to address.

JBLE-Langley has a long history of working with the Hampton Roads Bird Club and we see that partnership as an asset in proactive species management. This project is another way we can work together to protect both human and animal life through the prevention of wildlife related aircraft mishaps. Your support of our research would be greatly appreciated. If you are a landowner with an active Bald Eagle nest within a 5 mile radius of JBLE-Langley and are interested in helping reduce the risk of aircraft collisions with Bald Eagles, please reach out to either me (via email at

[alicia.garcia.4@us.af.mil](mailto:alicia.garcia.4@us.af.mil)) or Jeffery Cooper (at [jeff.cooper@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:jeff.cooper@dwr.virginia.gov)) with the location of the active nest(s).

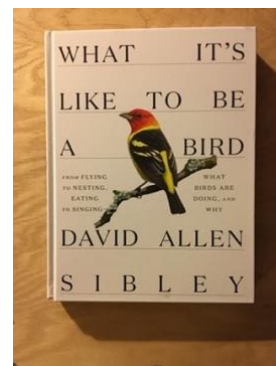
## **“What It’s Like to be a Bird” by David Allen Sibley**

Book Review by Pete Peterman

David Sibley writes in the Preface: “My plan to make this volume more than an identification guide led to the idea of adding short essays about some of the more interesting and amazing things birds do, to try to give readers a deeper appreciation of the birds they are identifying.” The essays, more like snippets of information, focus on one particular detail of bird biology and not intended to be read necessarily in sequence. There is frequent cross-referencing suggesting which essay to be read next.

In the “How to use this book,” under Organization is stated: “The heart of this book is the *Portfolio of Birds*. In this section, eighty-seven large paintings of birds appear *roughly life size* on the left-hand pages, featuring ninety-six species of familiar birds.” The paintings are stunning. On the right-hand pages are essays, many being cross-referenced to other birds. There is an introduction that serves as an annotated index on various topics such as feathers and social behavior. You can find all the essays listed on a topic in this introduction.

I found the book interesting and learned about behaviors that I did not know before. I enjoyed the illustrations which were not only on the left-hand sides of the pages, but also spread around the writings to illustrate the essays. Sibley is a very talented artist, and his capabilities are on full display in the book.



## HRBC Photo Contest Winners January-February 2021



Hooded Mergansers  
**Susan Maples** 1st Place January 2021

“This photo was taken in early January from my home on Sarah Creek in Gloucester County. The winter ducks bring me happiness during the cold weather, when I’m spending more time indoors than I would like. The hooded mergansers are definitely favorites of mine, and I look forward to seeing the first ones to arrive each year.”



Cooper's Hawk with prey  
**Pete Peterman** 2nd Place January 2021

“It was taken at the NN Park in the Arboretum on Sunday, Dec 6, 2020. I used a Nikon D500 with a 200-500 mm lens and a high ISO setting of 3200 to use a 1/1000 of a second exposure. There is a bird in the Cooper's Hawk talons with white in the tips of its

tail, but the at the prey angle prevented me from getting a look



Brown Pelican  
**Lynn Chandler** 1st Place February 2021

“I have lived on Salter’s Creek at the corner of Marrow Street for 23 years and have made my property a wildlife sanctuary. I provide water and large variety of food for all songbirds. For the waterfowl I provide a large floating raft and a tree stump. I have had a pair of Brown Pelicans on Salter’s Creek a couple of days in January & February. I am enjoying the HRBC photo contest very much for I love to share my bird photos.”



Surf Scoters  
**Mark Sopko** 2nd Place February 2021

“I took this picture on 16 January at Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve, Mathews VA.”

*What about the difference in head plumage?*

Mark's answer: "You have a point. Not quite sure as well. I don't get to see these guys up close too often, so I'm not sure if it is maturing molt (juvenile to adult) or genetic variation. I believe they maintain a basic plumage throughout the year."

The HRBC photo contest is run by Shawn Dash and Michael Meyer. Please participate. There will be one contest each month (2 winners each month for a total of 4 photos for the newsletter).

1. Each member may submit up to 2 photos taken in the last 60 days each month.
2. Please name each file with the photographer and the bird's name (i.e., ShawnDash\_Osprey).
3. Submit to Michael Meyer ([michael.meyer@cnu.edu](mailto:michael.meyer@cnu.edu)) by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.
4. The photos will also be uploaded to Facebook <https://facebook.com/hamptonroadsbirdclub> as an album called "HRBC December Photo Contest," etc.
5. Members can vote for their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> favorite, via an online form sent to members by email. All members can simply Click your favorite photo.
6. Votes will be tallied on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month and the winners contacted for a short write-up to accompany their photo in the newsletter.

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## Report of Field Trip to Beaverdam Park in Gloucester (1/16/2021)

By Harry and Rochelle Colestock

The weather cooperated with us with clear, calm conditions with temperatures in the 40's. These conditions helped us look at great distance over the water to find Ruddy Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads, Ringed-Necked Ducks, Canvasbacks, and a large number of Pied-Billed Grebes and Coots. Many of the ducks that had originally migrated to

Beaverdam pond areas this season have been leaving for other areas in the past six weeks, so we were lucky to see the variety still left in the area. Naturally, we were welcomed in the parking lot by resident Muscovy Ducks. Several Bald Eagles and a Red-Shouldered Hawk also made appearances. After spending a lot of time on the water birds, we ventured on the trails. By this time, the sun had started to warm up the forest and numerous bird species were vocalizing and feeding in the trees, brush piles, and ground areas. These species included Juncos; Yellow-Bellied Sapsuckers; Brown Thrasher; Downy, Red-Bellied, Hairy, and Pileated Woodpeckers; Eastern Phoebe; and Ruby-Crowned Kinglet. As we continued on trails near the water, it was clear that the rainfall in the last six months had saturated the soil and there were numerous water and muddy patches along the way.

Following the trip conclusion, Cindy Schulz invited participants to visit her home at which a small flock of Evening Grosbeaks have been feeding for several days. This showing capped a day in which we identified 38 other species.

HRBC species count on (1/16/2021):

Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker
Muscovy Duck (dom.)	Hairy Woodpecker
Mallard	Pileated Woodpecker
Canvasback	Eastern Phoebe
Ring-necked Duck	Blue Jay
Lesser Scaup	American Crow
Bufflehead	Carolina Chickadee
Hooded Merganser	Tufted Titmouse
Ruddy Duck	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Pied-billed Grebe	White-breasted Nuthatch
American Coot	Carolina Wren
Ring-billed Gull	Brown Thrasher
Double-crested Cormorant	Northern Mockingbird
Great Blue Heron	Eastern Bluebird
Black Vulture	Dark-eyed Junco
Bald Eagle	White-throated Sparrow
Red-shouldered Hawk	Song Sparrow
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal

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## 2020 Christmas Bird Count Results

By Bill Boeh

Below is a quick summary of the 2020 HRBC Christmas Bird Count (CBC). It's our contribution to the nation-wide annual Audubon effort. This information was presented at the February meeting, but is reproduced here for those who couldn't attend. Data from 2020 and 2019 are below (figures in parentheses represent data from 2019 for comparison):

**Total Species: 125 (115)**

**Total Birds: 20,857 (17,209)**

**Observers In Field: 32 (35)**

**Feeder-watchers: 9 (4)**

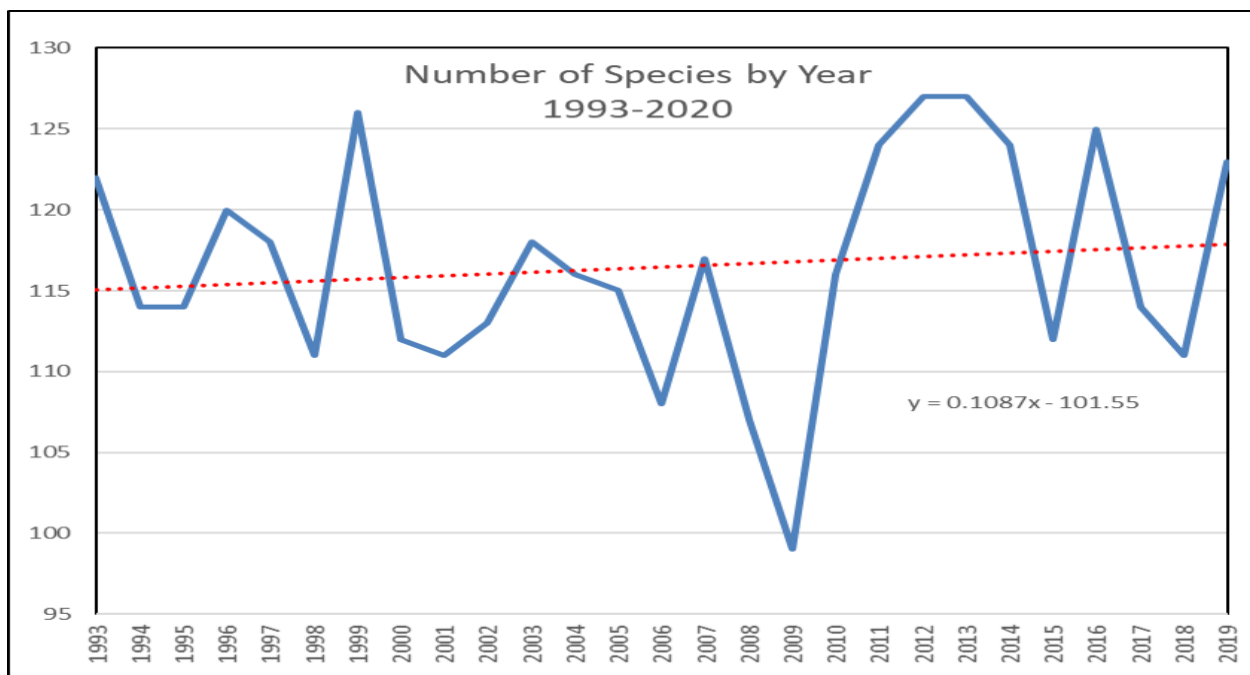
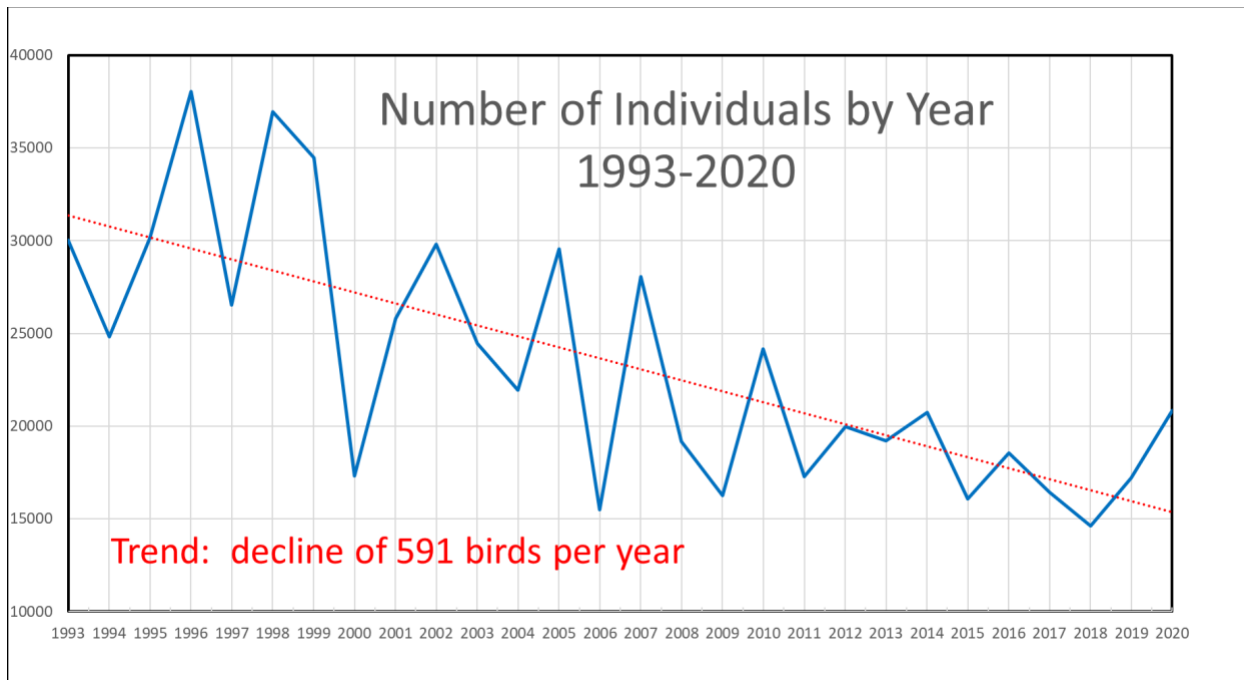
### 2020 (2019) Bird Count—Effort

Means	Hours	Distance (Miles)
On Foot	70.4 (67.0)	49.5 (46.5)
By Car	39.3 (36.8)	280.8 (290.8)
At feeders	37.0 (8.8)	N/A
Owling	1.3 (0)	2.3(0)
Totals	148.0 (112.6)	332.6 (337.3)

### General Comments:

- Weather was cold (30 to 42 degrees) and mostly clear, with light winds, and no precipitation.
- 1<sup>st</sup> ever Ash-throated Flycatcher (observed by Marc Nichols, Harpersville Sector, at Sandy Bottom).
- Nine feederwatchers—big uptick since last year (there were four)

Below graphs depict trends over time since 1993 (I chose to start the data trend analysis at 1993 since all thirteen sectors have been covered consistently since then):





## 2020 Christmas Bird Count Participants.

Let me take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all who participated—obviously without them, there is no count! Below is the list of participants. Sector leaders are marked by asterisks (\*).

Airport	Harpersville	Poquoson
Walt Harris*	Jane Frigo*	Betsy Garrett*
Gwen Harris*	Marc Nichols	Holly Horton
Lorraine Austin	Harwoods Mill	Andrew Horton
C.L. Tanner	Meredith Bell*	Wally Horton
Chesapeake Ave.	Lee Bell*	Marjorie Schenck
Ellis Maxey*	John Adair	Tabb
Wendy Maxey*	Marilyn Adair	Andy Hawkins*
Ft. Monroe	Langley	Marilee Hawkins*
Bryan Barmore*	Mark Sopko*	
Sharon Burton*	William Boeh	Feeder Watchers:
Grandview	Mariner's Museum	Barb Abraham
Pete Peterman*	Elisa Flanders*	Mary Copeland
Stuart Sweetman	Peggy Waterfield	Shawn Dash
Bill Williams	Mercury North	Bettye Fields
Hampton	Dave Youker*	Phyllis Simonetta
Dave Brown*	Tracy Tate	David Singletary
Cary Koronas	Newport News	Vicki Cooper
	Michael Meyer*	Melanie Paul
		Tom Charlock

Our 13 sectors are mapped on the HRBC website at <https://www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org/bird-counts>. A list of the number of birds observed by species, as well as a more comprehensive report (generated by Audubon) will also be posted on the HRBC website.

Finally, Audubon has launched a new online analysis tool—the Christmas Bird Count Trends Viewer (<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/where-have-all-birds-gone>). Users can input a target species, target area (down to the state level), and target time period (year range). The tool will yield the annual per cent change in the species population in the target area over the target time period. Some sobering results can be found here. For example, the American Bittern population in Virginia declined by -3.5% annually since 1970, and abundance declined from just over 15 million to just over 3 million.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me at [dolphrog1@yahoo.com](mailto:dolphrog1@yahoo.com).

President	Shawn Dash	drshawntdash@gmail.com	915-491-6227
Vice President	Pete Peterman	rwpeterman@verizon.net	757-766-8658
Secretary	William Boeh	dolphrog1@yahoo.com	757-951-7959
Treasurer	John Adair	adairjj@bunt.com	757-224-8920
Board: (7/18-6/21)	Brian Magill	b.e.magill157@netzero.com	757-810-2435
Board: (7/19-6/22)	Barbara Abraham	araknophyl@cox.net	757-244-0767
Board: (7/20-6/23)	Walter Harris	walthh2@gmail.com	757-898-8649
Field Trip Coordinator	Rochelle Colestock	hcolesto@hotmail.com	804-840-7224
Field Trip Coordinator	Harry Colestock	hcolesto@hotmail.com	804-840-7224
Web Editor	Wendy Maxey	emaxey@verizon.net	757-483-3003
Web Editor	Ellis Maxey	emaxey@verizon.net	757-483-3003
Hospitality	Jane Frigo	birderrjane@gmail.com	757-873-0721
Hospitality	Dianne Snyder	dianne5657@cox.net	757-872-6747
Newsletter Editor	Thomas Charlock	tomcharlock@gmail.com	757-599-3418
Publicity	Michael Meyer	michael.meyer@cnu.edu	757-303-4790
Membership	Gwen Harris	gwenkharris65@gmail.com	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) Drop off at: Wild Birds Unlimited, Kiln Creek Parkway in Yorktown.
- 4) <New> 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

