Hampton Roads Bird Club
General Meeting Minutes
Date: Thursday, September 12, 2024

1. The meeting was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and called to order at 7:09 p.m. There were 26 attendees.
2. New members/visitors: Kevin Roback introduced himself as our newest member.
3. Bird Sightings: Shawn Dash presented a picture of Black-billed Magpies he observed during a summer trip to the Rocky Mountains. Several members mentioned migrating warblers and many Muscovy ducks at First Landing State Park. Members are generally seeing warblers moving throughout the area. Mark Sopko recommended checking BirdCast live bird migration maps (<https://birdcast.info/migration-tools/live-migration-maps/>) that depicts migrants moving through in real time (it can provide views based on historical data as well).
4. ID Challenge: Shawn utilized birds from his summer trip to Colorado for the challenge, including a Northern Flicker (Red-shafted); American Pipit; and Black-chinned Hummingbird.
5. Reports:
	1. President:
		1. Reminded the membes to please pay your annual dues.
		2. Asked for volunteers to fill the vacant positions on the EXCOM (Host and Publicity). He reviewed the responsibilities of the Host committee. Advised that some of the things done in the past could be discontinued to ease the burden of the position. Brenda Tanner and Jeannie Atkins graciously volunteered to serve. \
		3. Reminded all that the Fall Big Day of Birding is Saturday October 26; send your list to Dave Youker.
		4. Christmas Bird Count will be Saturday, December 14.
	2. Membership: Nothing new to report.
	3. Host: As noted above, Brenda Tanner and Jeannie Atkins volunteered to serve as the Host Committee; Tina White volunteered to bring October snacks.
	4. Publication (newsletter): Nothing new to report.
	5. Publicity: Vacant. Jane Frigo advised that a member had volunteered to put the club on the Meetup website; she will provide details to the President.
	6. Website: Not present. President noted how valuable the website was in providing information to prospective members, and asked members to send pictures for posting.
	7. Treasurer:
		1. Presented the 2024-25 board-approved budget for membership review. Various line items were reviewed and discussed. No changes were recommended.
		2. Bill Boeh moved that the budget be approved as presented. The motion was seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
	8. Field Trip: James reviewed upcoming trips; see details in the September newsletter or at the website. He highlighted upcoming trip to Grandview on September 22, and noted a new field trip site location—the Voice of America Game Land in Beaufort, NC (noteworthy as the breeding habitat for the rare Henslow’s Sparrow).
6. Open Discussion:
	1. Bill Boeh presented a summary of this year’s activities and results for the Newport News Golf Course Bluebird trail.
7. Program Notes: Mark Sopko gave a presentation on his March 2024 trip to India, providing an general overview of the trip as well as the animals and birds observed.
8. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club
General Meeting Minutes
Date: Thursday, October 10, 2024

1. The meeting was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and called to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. New members/visitors: None
3. Bird Sightings: Stuart Sweetman reported a Common Raven flyover at the power lines on the last Sunday park walk (which started at the park campground because of a large park event); additional sightings during the walk included a Blue-winged Warbler and Yellow-billed Cuckoo.
4. ID Challenge: Northern Shrike, Marabou Stork, Vampire Ground Finch
5. Reports:
	1. President: Advised that the Christmas Bird Count will be conducted on Saturday, Dec. 14. Please contact Bill Boeh if you’d like to participate. Additionally, if you participated on the Newport News Golf Course Bluebird Trail and have any feedback, please provide it to Bill.
	2. Membership: Nothing new to report.
	3. Host: Tina White was thanked for providing refreshments for the meeting.
	4. Publication (newsletter): Nothing new to report.
	5. Publicity: Vacant
	6. Website: Not present.
	7. Treasurer: Encouraged members to pay their dues. Advised that Wild Wings Unlimited at Kiln Creek Parkway in Yorktown will NO LONGER accept HRBC dues payments; newsletter should be modified accordingly.
	8. Field Trip: Sign-ups for the Jan. 11, 2025 CBBT Island Field Trip will be initiated at the Nov. 14 club meeting.
6. Open Discussion:
	1. Dave Youker reminded all that the club’s Virginia Big Day is on Oct. 26. Send your list of observed species to Dave. Dave requested that species observed on the Eastern Shore Field Trip be sent to him as well.
7. Program Notes: – Dave Youker gave a presentation on Craney Island. Dave advised that while there is a natural Craney Island in Hampton Roads with some history, the presentation is regarding the larger artificial Craney Island made of dredge material. Snowy Egret, Cattle Egret, Barn Owl, Willow Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher and 26 warbler species have been observed there, as well as raccoon, beaver, coyote, mink, and snakes. The Motus Wildlife Tracking System has been deployed at Craney but not detected as many birds as hoped. Brian Watts has operated a microphone there and picked up Clapper Rail. Craney is a splendid water bird aviary, but our access to it has been quite restricted since enhanced security after 9/11. There has been more traffic by very heavy trucks because of the need to dredge the harbor deeper for the coming generation of larger container ships (raising the dikes, diverting roads, shoreline build up, etc.). Dave noted that Craney is not regarded as a candidate to replace the present nesting operation at Fort Wool; the initiative to build an island offshore of Hampton for that purpose is still ongoing.
8. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club
General Meeting Minutes
Date: Thursday, November 14, 2024

1. The meeting was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and called to order at 7:07 p.m. There were approximately 20 attendees.
2. New members/visitors: New members in attendance were Dan Smith and Brandon Breitberg.
3. Bird Sightings: 2 Eurasian Wigeon at Lake Taylor; a Baltimore Oriole in a local backyard; Trumpeter Swans at Sky Meadows State Park; Orange Crown Warbler; 2 Brown Creepers in a back yard; Eastern Phoebes at Saylor’s Creek.
4. ID Challenge: Hooded Merganser; Swamp Sparrow; Song Sparrow; Sedge Wren.
5. Reports:
	1. Membership: Nothing new to report.
	2. Host: Dec 12 Xmas dinner; passed around signup for the pot luck. Brenda Tanner. 6:30 appetizers 7:00 dinner.
	3. Publication (Newsletter editor): Thanked contributors for their articles & photos in the last letter; need input for next letter Dec 25.
	4. Publicity: Vacant.
	5. Website: Not present.
	6. Treasurer:
	7. Field Trip: Pleasure House & CBBT (0800 & 1030 groups). See James’ email.
6. Open Discussion:
	1. The President advised that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources have released their Draft Detailed Project Report and Environmental Assessment (DPR/EA) for the Hampton Roads Beneficial Use of Dredged Material project. This project provides habitat for the seabird colony currently located at Fort Wool. The draft can be viewed here: <https://www.nao.usace.army.mil/About/Projects/HR-Beneficial-Use-of-Dredged-Material/>. Per this website, the “draft DPR/EA evaluates potential solutions to create safe, permanent, and biologically suitable habitat for a displaced seabird colony using dredged material from federal navigation channels. This potential habitat would also provide ecological benefits to additional fish and wildlife species.” The deadline for public comment on this plan is Dec. 13, 2024. You may provide comments by email or postal mail to:

Gina Dotolo
Email: gina.m.dotolo@usace.army.mil
Mail: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Norfolk District
ATTN: Gina Dotolo
Planning and Policy Branch
803 Front Street
Norfolk, VA 2351

* 1. Bill Boeh reminded all that the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in the Newport News Sector will be conducted December 14. Other local counts discussed, including the Mathews Sector CBC on December 29 (Mark Sopko is the compiler, contact Mark if you’d like to participate).
1. Speaker’s Notes: Osprey Watch Alliance by Tomoko Hamada, Ph.D., Middle Peninsula Master Naturalist. Dr. Hamada is the organizer of this citizen science project for the master naturalists. Her project’s goal is to monitor the status of the Osprey population in Mobjack Bay. Dr. Hamada discussed breeding behaviors and issues with reproductivity rate declines in recent years. The rate has declined to well below the population maintenance rate (lower even than the rate during the peak of the DDT era). This decline is correlated with a lack of menhaden, which is their main source of food. Scarcity of menhaden may be driven by industrial fish harvest of menhaden within the bay; this issue is being studied by the Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council. Dr. Hamada is monitoring the study and hopes that suitable recommendations will emerge that ensure adequate supplies of menhaden to maintain Osprey populations in the bay.
2. The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club
General Meeting Minutes
Date: Thursday, February 13, 2025

1. The meeting was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and called to order at 7:08 p.m. There were 20 attendees.
2. New members/visitors: no new members were in attendance.
3. Bird Sightings: Great Cormorant (Colonial Parkway); Piping Plover (Bethel Beach); Cedar Waxwings & Osprey (Hampton University).
4. ID Challenge: The President used a Valentine’s Day theme for his challenges: Atlantic Puffin “beak kissing,” Rosy-faced Lovebirds; Roseate Spoonbills, and Red-capped Manakins.
5. Reports:
	1. President: Requested volunteers to lead bird walks on Fort Monroe [when?]. Requested a member to volunteer as chairman for the upcoming election of officers and board members. Chairman’s duties will be to develop and present a slate of candidates at the April meeting. Club membership will elect the officers and board members at the May meeting; officers and board members will be installed at the June picnic.
	2. Membership: Nothing new to report.
	3. Host Committee: Thanked Mark Sopko and Jane Frigo, who provided snacks and refreshments for the meeting. A signup sheet was passed around for volunteers to bring refreshments to the March meeting.
	4. Newsletter: Requested members to please submit inputs for the March-April newsletter by February 25.
	5. Publicity: Vacant
	6. Website: the website has been updated with recent documents.
	7. Treasurer: Nothing new to report.
6. Field Trips: Back Bay tram trip is full; $8.00 fee is required. Upcoming trips are York River State Park (March 22) and Hog Island (April 12).
7. Open Discussion:
	1. Jane Frigo announced that the first Newport News Park walk will be held on Saturday, March 1 due to the All-City Marathon taking place on Sunday March 2nd. Jane also announced that the spring count will be held on May 3; the Great Dismal Swamp Festival has been discontinued; and advised that Bill Boeh will be moving to the Richmond area so new compiler(s) for the spring and Christmas Bird Count will be needed.
8. Speaker’s Notes: Christmas Bird Count results by Mark Sopko. Mark provided a review of the results from the Newport News and Mathews count circles.
9. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by: Jane Frigo (the Secretary was absent).

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club
General Meeting Minutes
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025

1. The meeting was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and called to order at 7:09 p.m. There were 30 attendees. The meeting was chaired by the Vice President as the President was absent.
2. New members/visitors: Margie and Bob Gomez introduced themselves as new members.
3. Bird Sightings: Ospreys in Tabb; 40 to 50 Turkey and Black Vultures are socializing in Woods of Tabb subdivision; Cedar Waxwings visited a member’s birdbath; numerous Horned Grebes near the shipyard in Newport News; Ospreys building nest on a chimney near Hampton River Bridge; Tundra Swans heard migrating at night.
4. ID Challenge: Swainson's Warbler; American Redstart; Nashville Warbler; Golden-winged Warbler.
5. Reports:
	1. President: Not present. The Vice President presented the proposed slate of officers for 2025-2026. All current officers are willing to continue in their current positions except the Secretary and 1 Board member whose term is expiring. Additionally, the Publicity committee chair position is still vacant. With Bill Boeh departing the local area in the near future, the club will need a new lead for compiling the Christmas and Spring Bird Counts and trail lead for the Newport News Golf Club Bluebird Trail.
	2. Membership: Nothing new to report.
	3. Host Committee: The co-chairs thanked Tina White and Melissa DeHart for providing snacks. They announced that the year-end picnic will be on June 7 at the Sandy Bottom Nature Park pavilion.
	4. Newsletter: The editor thanked the authors who contributed articles and photos and advised that inputs for the May-June letter are due April 25.
	5. Publicity: Vacant
	6. Website: Newsletter is posted on website, along with field trips, etc.
	7. Treasurer: Nothing new to report.
6. In the field: York River State Park field trip is March 22; meet at parking lot at 8:30. Next trips is Hog Island on April 12 and Dismal Swamp on April 26 & 27.
7. Open Discussion:
	1. Bill Boeh reminded all that the Spring Bird Count will be May 3. He added that he needs a new leader for the Poquoson sector since Betsy Garrett has stepped down (she will remain active as a participant). Bill also advised that bluebird box monitoring at the golf course will start the week of March 24.
	2. The Vice President announced that the conference room at Sandy Bottom is not available for the April meeting, so the April meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
	3. Marc Nichols advised that there is a new chief ranger at Sandy Bottom; Marc will explain the club's relationship with the park to the new chief.
	4. The Vice President sought the attending members’ inputs regarding the memorial donations of paintings in honor of Tommie B. Turner, who had recently passed away. Her daughter, Toni Turner, contacted the club via email, advising that Tommie Turner was not a club member, but was an avid bird lover and artist who painted birds. Toni Turner has two of Tommie’s bird paintings that were in Tommie’s room at the nursing home and inquired if the Club would accept them as donations for display or to sell. The preponderance of members’ opinion was to accept the paintings, which could be auctioned off as a fundraiser.
8. Speaker’s Notes: “Arctic to the Antarctic and In–between” by Jose E Hernandez, a former president of HRBC. Jose shared his spectacular photos of landscapes, birds, and other wildlife taken during his travels to the Antarctic, South America, North America, and the Arctic.
9. The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Mark Sopko, Vice President

Hampton Roads Bird Club

General Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, April 10, 2025

1. The meeting was held via Zoom and called to order at 7:04 p.m. There were 22 attendees.

2. New members/visitors: One visitor was present.

3. Bird Sightings: Shawn Dash observed a Least Bittern at SC Wildlife Refuge; Mark shared a photo of a Barn Swallow taken at his barn, Meredith Bell has had Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at her feeders; James Abbott has a Rufous Hummingbird coming to his feeder; multiple other members have seen hummingbirds as well. Jerry Via reported a Pacific Loon at Crater Lake; Kai Dickson saw his first Swainson Warbler at Jericho Ditch.

4. ID Challenge: Black-throated Green Warbler; Swainson’s Warbler; Savannah Sparrow; Marsh Wren.

5. Reports:

A. President:

i. Hampton University students will be presenting analysis of spring bird counts, focusing on woodpeckers

ii. Elections for 2025-26 Executive Committee:

a. Need two non-board members to run the election committee and election. Duties are to compile slate of candidates and run the election at the May meeting.

b. Positions being vacated or already vacant include Secretary, Publicity, Board member for 2025-2028, and Compiler, Christmas and Spring Bird Counts.

B. Membership:

C. Host: Annual picnic will be Saturday June 7 noon, at the Parker Pavilion at Sandy Bottom. annual picnic. Note, there is no electricity at the pavilion. Signup sheet at the May meeting.

D. Publication (newsletter): Please send info by April 25 for the next newsletter.

E. Publicity: Vacant.

F. Website: Not present.

G. Treasurer: Not present.

H. Field Trip: April 12 will be the Hog Island Wildlife Management Area; Great Dismal Swamp April 26 and 27; email James if you would like to go. Will email members regarding the May trip to the Voice of America Gameland (breeding site for the Henslow Sparrow)

6. Open Discussion:

A. Club Spring Big Day bird count will be April 19; send Dave Youker your species count. Must be observed within Virginia.

B. Bill Boeh reported on the upcoming spring count: Was a little short of volunteers last week, but a second solicitation yielded additional volunteers.

C. Bill also advised the status of the Newport News Golf Club Bluebird Trail; 7 active nests so far; no box checks this week due to weather and volunteer illness. Schedule looks better for getting box checks done next week.

D. Mark Sopko advised that Ranger Aaron Firth contacted him, advising the National Monument leadership there would like to start conducting bird walks on Fort Monroe. If you are interested let Mark know if you are interested in participating.

7. Program Notes: Jerry Via provided a great presentation on the special features and adaptations of bird nostrils (i.e., their location, orientation, and structure). Covered multiple families and species, including sea birds, raptors, vultures; ravens, crows. Jerry’s presentation also covered species observed birding various locations on the Outer Banks during this past winter.

8. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club

General Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025

1. The meeting was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and called to order at 7:07 p.m. There were 20 attendees.

2. New members/visitors: none.

3. Bird Sightings: Fledgling Brown Thrashers observed by Charm Peterman; Rusty Blackbird observed by Wendy Maxey; Eastern Kingbirds were observed in a backyard; immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron observed at Hampton University; Angela Herring observed 2 Northern Mockingbird males “dancing” which apparently is a territorial display.

4. ID Challenge: American Kestrel; Northern Parula; Double-crested Cormorant.

5. Reports:

A. President:

i. The results of the club “Big Birding Day were presented.

ii. Shawn presented a study of long-term population local bird trends (using Woodpecker species as a surrogate taxon). The study was compiled by some of his students and based on club spring count data as well as other eBird and iNaturalist data.

B. Membership: no report.

C. Host: thanked Wendy Maxey and Melissa Dehart for providing snacks. The committee passed around a signup sheet for the annual picnic scheduled for June 7 (see newsletter for details).

D. Newsletter: Thanked the authors and photo contributors for most recent newsletter.

E. Publicity: Vacant

F. Website: No report.

G. Treasurer: No report

H. Field Trip: The final trip of the year will be on May 17, visiting Voice of America Game Land in Beaufort County. The site is the nearest breeding location for the Henslow’s Sparrow.

i. Election of 2025-2026 officers. Ryan Walsh conducted the election process per the club Constitution and Bylaws:

a. Presentation of slate of nominees. The slate of nominees was presented as listed below. All current officers are willing to continue in their positions for the next year, with the exception of Secretary. Additionally, one board member’s term is expiring; the Publicity position is currently vacant; and a new compiler for spring and Christmas Bird Counts will be needed for next year. Unfortunately there were no nominees for these positions.

President - Dr. Shawn T. Dash

Vice President - Mark Sopko

Secretary – no nominee

Treasurer - John Adair

Board Member (7/25-6/28) - Michael Meyer

Board Member (7/23-6/26) - Pete Peterman

Board Member (7/24-7/27) - Dianne Snyder

Board (former president) - Dave Youker

Newsletter Editor - Tom Charlock

Publicity – no nominee

Website Editors - Ellis and Wendy Maxey

Field Trip Coordinator - James Abbott

Hospitality - Brenda Tanner and Jeannie Atkins

Membership - Gwen Harris

Leader, Sunday Newport News Walks - Jane Frigo

Compiler, Christmas and Spring Bird Counts – no nominee

b. Ryan called for any for additional nominations from the floor; there were none.

c. Ryan sought a motion that that the slate of nominees be accepted as presented. Charm Peterman so moved; the motion was seconded. The attendees voted by a show of hands; the motion was passed unanimously.

6. Open Discussion:

A. Dave Singletary solicited for volunteers to assist with a Boy Scout birding merit badge event at the Canon facility on May 31 from 9:30-12:00. The plan is for Bryan Barmore to provide a presentation on birds, after which the scouts will bird the property accompanied by a club member. Contact Dave if you’d like to volunteer.

B. Mark Sopko advised about the upcoming BBS Colonial National Historical Park; if interested contact Dorothy Dyer. Mark has her contact info contact him if interested.. Training will be provided.

7. Speaker’s Notes: Hummingbirds by Shawn Dash. Shawn provided a great presentation on hummingbirds (physiology, migratory feats, life history; pollination; watching hummers, feeding hummingbirds.

8. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club

General Meeting Minutes

Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025

1. The club held its picnic (in lieu of a normal meeting) 12:00 p.m. at Sandy Bottom Nature Park. There were 28 attendees. This was a mainly social gathering; the only business conducted was the installation of the newly elected Executive Committee members for 2025-26. No officer or committee chair reports were provided or speaker presentation provided.

2. Attending members generously provided appetizers, hors d'oeuvres, main dishes, side dishes or salads, and desserts. The group shared stories regarding recent birding adventures. Jacque Montfrans, Elisabeth Wilkins, Jane Frigo, and Diane Snyder described their trip to Ohio to attend the “Biggest Week in American Birding” festival; other members shared more local stories.

3. The gathering adjourned at approximately 1:15 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh (Secretary)

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President