



Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

Hampton Roads Bird Club

www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org

Vol. 64, No. 1

September/October 2015

September 10th Meeting
6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program
at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

By Pete Peterman

“Birds of the Hawaiian Islands”

Pete will present a slideshow of the birds that he photographed this past April on the islands of Oahu, Kauai, and Hawaii with emphasis on the endemics. The endemic birds are heavily impacted by human intervention and loss of habitat. Settlers brought mosquitos, pigs, sheep, cattle, cats, rats, and other harmful non-native animals. Mosquitos brought avian malaria and avian pox, to which the endemics did not have immunity. Every one of Hawaii’s remaining native forest birds is included in the most recent State of the Birds “Watch List.” Seven bird species have, in all likelihood, vanished since 1980. Pete will cover the current situation and efforts to save the remaining species.

Hosted by Katrina Dash, Marilyn Adair, Andy Hawkins, Dave Youker, and Tom Charlock

HRBC Outdoors September-October

Regular Bird Walks in Newport News Park
First and third Sundays of *every* month 7:00 AM
Meet in large parking lot behind Ranger Station
Walk Leader: Jane Frigo (birderjane@gmail.com
757-873-0721)

Hog Island Field Trip on Sept. 19 (see page 2)
Contact Stuart Sweetman (nnva4x4@aol.com
757-595-1677)

Eastern Shore Field Trip on Oct 17 (see page 3)
Contact Stuart Sweetman (nnva4x4@aol.com
757-595-1677)

October 8th Meeting
6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program
at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

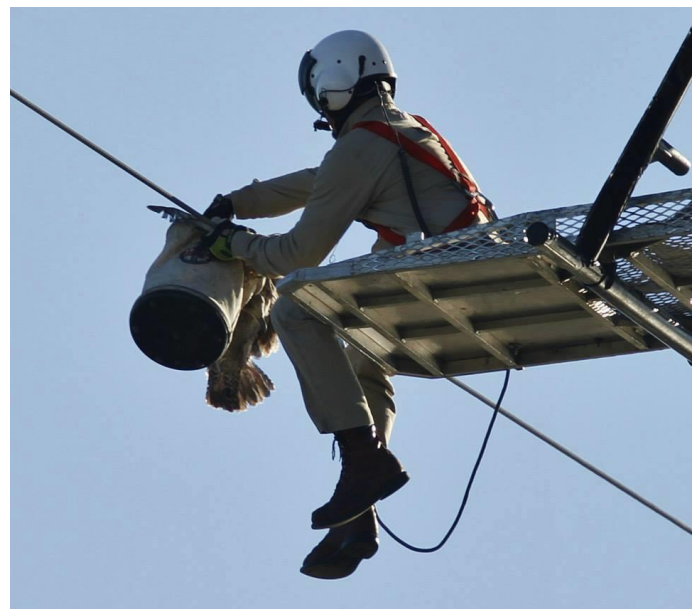
By Karen Roberts

“Rehabilitating Tidewater Wildlife”

Karen Roberts is a federal and state permitted wildlife rehabilitator in the Hampton Roads area; and a volunteer for animal rescue with the Virginia Beach Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). She rehabilitates injured adult birds, including fish eaters, shore birds, waterfowl, song birds, hummingbirds, and small mammals such as squirrels, opossums, and rabbits. Juvenile rehab is limited to mammals able to open their eyes and birds able to feed on their own.

Hosted by HRBC Executive Committee

Presentations are scheduled by Brenda Gervais.



*The Virginia Beach SPCA Wildlife Program in action
(HRBC President's Perch article on next page)*

President's Perch

By Dave Youker

One of the last presentations of the spring addressed the two parts of birding. The first being the pure enjoyment of birds through personal outings, field trips, walks and club presentations. The second part deals with conservation efforts. If we don't address the second part, the first will surely suffer. HRBC has been actively involved in conservation efforts over its long history, but this year I hope to re-energize some efforts that may have waned slightly.

The first action the board took over the summer was to appoint a representative to the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Organization board. This will provide another avenue to share ideas regarding conservation activities and possibly partner where our interests are mutually served. Andy Hawkins has agreed to be our representative, so please contact him with any items of interest.

The second action is to revitalize efforts associated with the Western Shore Marshes Important Bird Area that the club adopted several years ago. Previous plans are being reviewed and updated, so look for more details in the coming weeks. If you have any thoughts or interest in getting involved in these or other conservation efforts, don't hesitate to contact me.

Based on initial review of planned field trips and programs, we're set for another great year. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the September meeting and upcoming club events.

Tweet and Eat

By Katrina Dash

A highlight of your month is meeting up with old friends to discuss birding at the HRBC monthly meeting. Nothing compliments good birds and good friends quite as well as good food - so sign-up with me, the Club Hospitality Coordinator (kweber427@gmail.com 915-471-1287), to bring some grub (food, not worms) for our next meeting. We're also seeking volunteers to serve on the Holiday Dinner planning committee. Sign-up sheets will also be available at the September 10th Meeting.



Eastern Pondhawk Dragonfly (by George Boyles at NN Park)

Field Trip to Hog Island and Ragged Island Wildlife Management Areas

Saturday, 8:00 AM, Sept. 19, 2015

By Stuart Sweetman

The September HRBC field trip will be to Hog Island and Ragged Island Wildlife Management Areas on September 19th. The trip is scheduled for 8:00 AM, but the group will meet at the Huntington Beach parking lot in Newport News at 6:45 and depart the lot at 7:15 for the 45 minute drive. Directions from Newport News: Cross the James River Bridge and make a right onto Route 32. Take that to Route 10 and go past Smithfield to Surry County about 5 miles past the county line to Hog Island Road on the right. Go all the way to the end through the power plant checkpoint to the Island. There will be a fee for this trip. The admission to Hog Island is \$51 per group, so we'll divide that among those attending. Please sign up at a monthly Club meeting or contact Stuart Sweetman (nnva4x4@aol.com 757-595-1677).



Le Moqueur (Leclerc, 18th century)

Field Trip to Kiptopeke and Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge

Saturday, 8:00 AM, Oct. 17, 2015
By Stuart Sweetman

The October HRBC field trip is to Kiptopeke State Park and the lower Eastern Shore on October 17th at 8:00 AM. The group will meet at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel South Island toll plaza at 7:00 AM. We will leave at 7:30 and head to Kiptopeke State Park parking lot. From there we will decide the next destination based on tides, weather and birding reports of the previous week. Possible locations include the Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge, Ramp Road or Sunset Beach. If you wish to attend this field trip, please sign up at a monthly Club meeting or contact Stuart Sweetman (nnva4x4@aol.com or 757 595-1677).

The Kiptopeke Challenge

By Dave Youker

The Williamsburg and Hampton Roads Bird Clubs have agreed that it is appropriate to inform members advising them of the upcoming Kiptopeke Challenge on September 19th and providing them an opportunity to donate to one of the teams. Kiptopeke Challenge is Coastal Virginia Wildlife Organization's (CVWO) program to bring awareness to avian migration on the Eastern Shore, as well as supporting numerous other conservation efforts. A description of the conservation activities can be found on the CVWO website at cvwo.org.

Currently there are two teams with members from these two clubs:

Wild Birds Unlimited –
Brian Taber and Dave Youker

Wren Wrustlers –
Shirley Devan, Jan Lockwood, and Nancy Barnhart

If you would like to donate to one or both teams, make your check payable to CVWO and send to one of the addresses below:

Wild Birds Unlimited: Send donations to Brian Taber, 103 Exeter Court, Williamsburg, VA 23185.

Wren Wrustlers: Send donations to Shirley Devan, 6227 Tucker Landing, Williamsburg, VA 23188

If you would like to know more about the Kiptopeke Challenge or to form your own team, visit the CVWO website or contact me directly.

Thanks for giving consideration to this worthy cause.

HRBC Membership Dues Remain Unchanged

by John Adair

Annual membership dues for 2015-16 remain \$15 for singles and \$20 families and are due in September 2015. Members who have already paid their dues for the upcoming year will be notified.

There are three convenient ways to submit dues in addition to paying the treasurer at a meeting: 1) Mail renewal form (optional) and check to: John Adair, HRBC Treasurer, 109 Nansemond Turn, Yorktown VA 23693, (757) 224-8920; 2) Drop off payment at Wild Wings Nature Store, Glendale Shopping Center, 12458 Warwick Blvd, Newport News, VA 23606, (757) 595-3060; or, 3) Drop off payment at Wild Birds Unlimited, 3120 Kiln Creek Pkwy, Yorktown VA 23693, (757) 875-1936.

Membership dues is the club's primary source of annual income, providing funds to support our annual contributions to an educational scholarship/internship program, Bluebird Society of Virginia, Virginia Society of Ornithology, Coastal Virginia Wildlife Organization, and Friends of Sandy Bottom.

Your treasurer thanks you in advance for your on-time payment.

June 6, 2015 Club Picnic as Oral, Written and Visual History



Monarch on pre-picnic walk (by Bill Boeh)

It's becoming a tradition for Meredith Bell to lead a bird walk on the day of the annual HRBC picnic, and for this one she reported "16 early morning risers, and they tallied 58 species..."



Prothonotary Warbler (by Bill Boeh)

"Virginia Boyles did an excellent job organizing her band of helpers for set-up and cooking at shelter #4, next to the water. Everyone enjoyed burgers, hot dogs and a wide variety of side dishes and desserts. Officers were installed for the coming year, and a grand time was had by all!"

The picnic was the concluding act of Virginia's stint as Club Hospitality Coordinator. Here's Virginia, by way of email speak: "I didn't go for the walk, and am not sure I saw all that went on, since I was a bit distracted trying to make sure that everything we

needed was in place. Elisa and Nick came after I had put the knives & forks away, so I had to dig in the basket for some, and John had to warm a burger for them, but we still had lots of food. Wendy had volunteered to help clean up, and she said you could tell it was a good party because people didn't want to go home after they ate. I loved that the squirrels and birds were attacking the tables as we all stood at the overlook before anything was unpacked except Bill's box of treats. Also enjoyed seeing the family of woodpeckers who refused healthy watermelon in favor of hotdogs, having Gwen explore the fungus on a nearby tree, seeing our youngest birder napping in a backpack, and watching the older ones sharing stories. Doesn't get much better than that."



Barred Owl (by Bill Boeh)

Another tradition for the HRBC picnic is the annual photo line up of Officers, Board Members, and Committee Chairs. Board Members Elisa Enders and Pete Peterman are not seen in the photo below from Meredith's HRBC URL. From left to right and seated are Jane Frigo and Jessica Ausura; standing are Nancy Gruttman-Tyler, Meredith Bell, Andy Hawkins, Gwen Harris, Kristina Dash, Tom Charlock, Brenda Gervais, Bill Boeh, Stuart Sweetman, Dave Youker, and John Adair.



By Anthony Nixon

The Fate of the Newly Vacated Newport News City Farm: Waterfront Park or Something Else?

One issue facing HRBC, other local conservation-oriented organizations, and the Peninsula's general public concerns the future disposition of the grounds of the Newport News City Farm. On a high bluff overlooking the James River and the small Deep Creek harbor, those grounds afford breathtaking waterfront views to which few in this area commonly have access. We've used its borders to good effect in annual bird counts.



Newport News City Farm (Daily Press photo)

It would surprise many outsiders to learn that for decades, the waterfront grounds of Newport News City Farm (~50 acres) served as a low security detention facility. That role has ended completely, but the grounds remain closed to the public. Ideally, the public would have full access to the City Farm grounds as an amendment of the adjacent Riverview Farm Park (~200 acres that's much plainer, with a bare 100 feet on the James River between the City Farm and a waste treatment plant).



Between City Farm and treatment plant (Daily Press)

What are the official plans for City Farm land? The Daily Press reports (June 18, 2015) that Newport News City Manager Jim Bourney said

“The city has not received any proposals. Staff is not working on any proposals and we are not planning on doing any.”

One suspects that local real estate developers are most interested in the City Farm waterfront.

Municipal development of the City Farm grounds as a public park would entail some expense. But what about simply obtaining access – permission to enter and use with discretion – even if not yet as a formal park? For example, Virginia Peninsula Astronomy/Stargazers (VPAS), another club with conservation interests, uses Hampton's Grundland Creek Park (an old Nike missile base) two evenings each month. Grundland Creek Park is actually under lock and key, and VPAS has special permission to enter. With the volunteer labor and direction of a local Boy Scout group (Eagle Scout project with ~\$5,000 grant from Hampton), VPAS built a set of heavy telescope piers there last summer. The Tidewater Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists engages in similar volunteer activities to enable public appreciation of the environment.

Employees of Newport News have been courteous, friendly, and prompt in responding to HRBC requests for access to City Farm land; but so far, the answer is “no”. Lorraine Austin of the Newport News Planning Commission has given us some leads for contacts in the city government. It will likely come down to a meeting of the City Council – at which we'll then need as many residents as possible, who are willing to show up. If we can secure, in concert with allied organizations, some limited access (as VPAS has at Grundland Creek Park in Hampton) to City Farm, we might be able to hold off the continued banishment of the public from these fine grounds.

In sum, it comes down to this: Will HRBC members express a firm interest that Newport News City Farm grounds should be open to the public for the enjoyment of nature? A meeting of our Executive Committee during August assigned Tom Charlock, Bill Boeh and Brenda Gervais to sound out other organizations about this topic. It will be an item for discussion at our meeting on September 10.

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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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