



Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

Hampton Roads Bird Club

www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org

Vol. 62, No. 5

May/June 2014

May 8th Meeting

6:00 PM Social 7:00 PM Program

at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

Kristin Hicks

"Project Perry for Parrots".

Project Perry is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, adoption, and sanctuary of parrots living in captivity. It is accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries. Kristin Hicks will tell us the story of her parrots and other birds, as well as Project Perry's related activities and goals. She hails from Louisa, Va. The presentation will aim to provide HRBC members with a different perspective on birds of the wild.

Refreshments for this meeting begin early, at 6:00 PM. The social hour features a sale of both used books and equipment for feeding birds.

Meeting information from Phyllis Roth
Hosted by Hayes and Joyce Williams, John and Marilyn Adair, and Brenda Gervais

May to August HRBC Events

Regular Bird Walks in Newport News Park

The first and third Sunday of every month 7:00 AM
Meet in large parking lot behind Ranger Station
Trip Leader: Jane Frigo (757-873-0721)

Field Trip to Richmond on May 10 (see page 2)

Contact TomCharlock@gmail.com (757-599-3418)

Club Picnic with Local Birding on June 14

(see column on right)

Contact V.W.Boyles@verizon.net (757-867-8857)

June 14th Picnic

8:00 AM Birding Noon Meal

at Newport News Park

This year's picnic will be June 14, 2014 at Newport News Park in the same shelter we enjoyed last year, #3. It is located off the parking lot where we meet for the Sunday walks, and is near the overlook off the path. There is a paved path from the parking lot out to the shelter.

We will enjoy a bird walk at 8:00 AM. led by Meredith and Lee Bell, so we urge you to come early. We hope to eat about noon, and (to assure variety) a sheet will be available at the May 8th meeting to sign up for the dish you wish to bring. The club will provide burgers, hot dogs, the trimmings, and paper products; so appetizers, side dishes, and desserts will be needed. You might want to bring folding chairs to help with seating. Don't miss this chance to celebrate the fantastic year we've had with the club, before we take the summer off. If you have questions, contact Virginia Boyles at (757)867-8857.

Notice by Virginia Boyles

Picnic Committee: Virginia Boyles, Phyllis Roth, Donna Buchanan, and Brenda Gervais

The President's Perch

by Dave Youker +

It's always somewhat sad to write the article for the May/June newsletter, because it reminds me that we'll soon take two months off for summer. While we may not meet as a club, summer is a great time to familiarize yourself with our resident and summer species. Before we meet again, some of those summer species will already be on their way south.

[President's Perch continued]

Our spring count of 3 May, which included the tally from home feeders, was a great opportunity to hone birding skills. Nancy Gruttman Tyler runs our counts. Keep up with the HRBC web page, if you wish to participate in similar upcoming events. They are sometimes called on a rather short fuse [*as your Club adheres to the Gregorian Calendar, while Bird Notes uses the delayed Russian Orthodox, you might miss such events by relying on just this Newsletter*].

Looking to get into either short or long-term birding opportunities? There are plenty! Our own club, the Virginia Society of Ornithology (i.e., VSO trip in following article), and Audubon all have activities that need help. Contact me, and I'll help you find the right match for your interest.

VSO Summer Field Trip June 6-8

by Meredith Bell

Join Meredith and Lee Bell as they lead the summer VSO trip in Front Royal June 6-8. Our club was well-represented on this trip 2 years ago, and everyone had a great time! Beautiful vistas and lots of birds in the Shenandoah Valley. There's no fee if you're a VSO member. Get details at the VSO website: http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html

Note from the Treasurer

by John Adair

Our club remains in good financial standing and achieved another balanced budget year thanks to our membership dues, the club's primary source of annual income. As a reminder, dues are payable in September for the ensuing 12 months and bylaws require any member who has not paid dues by January 1st to be removed from the membership roster. So, remember to bring your dues to the September meeting. And by the way, members may pay for future year's dues if desired and the treasurer will keep track of the advanced payment.

In addition to paying your dues at a meeting, here are THREE additional ways to submit dues: 1) Mail

renewal form (if available) 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, 27 Hidenwood Shopping Center, Newport News VA 23606, (757) 595-3060; or, 3) Drop off payment at: Wild Birds Unlimited, 3120 Kiln Creek Pkwy, Suite A, Yorktown VA 23693, (757) 875-1936. Renewal forms are available at the stores and in the HRBC newsletters.



Photo by John Adair

Field Trip to Richmond's Belle Isle and James River Park System Saturday, 7:00 AM, May 10, 2014

****New directions on next page to avoid
special event traffic jam in Richmond****

The HRBC field trip back in May 2013 to three sites in the James River Park system yielded what Stuart Sweetman called "a 16 warbler species day". Those 16 warbler species are listed on page 4, and on 10 May 2014 we'll walk over the same ground. *See the three sections with italic font on page 3 for respective descriptions of the three sites.* Boots are suggested because some areas (Buttermilk Trail and the scenic and historic Belle Isle) have sections with hard rocks; portions of the wetlands near Pony Pasture Rapids are muddy. Long pants are also advised because of poison ivy (very evident on the Buttermilk Trail on April 28, 2014). Bring lunch and snacks as the trip will run to mid-afternoon.

If you wish to attend this event, please contact Tom Charlock by email (TomCharlock@gmail.com), phone (757-599-3418) or sign up at the meeting.

**** This page has new directions for the field trip to Richmond on May 10. They should enable you to avoid a traffic jam in downtown Richmond and the adjacent south bank of the James River. The jam will be caused by a special event on the morning of our trip. ****

Carpool leaves at 7:00 AM on Saturday, 10 May 2014, from the large parking lot behind the Ranger Station in Newport News Park. The drive to the James River Park system takes about 75 minutes.

To parking area for Reedy Creek boat ramp and Buttermilk Trail (near 4000 Riverside Dr., Richmond, Virginia):

Take I64 West.

When nearing downtown Richmond, stay in the right lane (signs for I 64W/I 195WS/Powwhite Pkwy) and be ready for a very quick move.

Use Exit 186 on the left. "186" may be hard to see, but look for sign to I 195S toward Powwhite Pkwy.

You will soon be on VA-76S/Powwhite Pkwy (signs for VA 150/US 60/US 360).

After crossing the James River, exit (\$0.70 toll or EZ Pass) on right for Forest Hill Ave

Left onto Forest Hill Ave and drive a few miles.

When you pass The Forest Restaurant on left, nudge into left turn lane.

Left at traffic light onto Westover Hill Blvd and drive 0.4 mile.

Right onto small Evelyn Byrd Rd (Evelyn is one block beyond a traffic light on Westover).

Evelyn will swing you to the left. When you soon approach a fork

Take right fork onto Riverside Dr. You'll eventually pass 42nd St on your right, then drive one more block on Riverside

Left at dip for Reedy Creek/Buttermilk Trail. Park in lot before railroad tracks.

Our hiking objective on Buttermilk Trail is a tree-top steel observation tower. We'll use a steep, rocky, narrow half-mile trail through woods. It can also be reached using a very easy flat trail. Reedy carpark has a changing station and outdoor-type toilet but no plumbing. There are rest rooms with weakly flowing water and poor lighting at nearby Forest Hill Park, which hosts a popular food festival on Saturdays. If you want the restrooms at Forest Hill Park, drive back upstream on Riverside Dr, turn left onto 42 nd

St. and go another half mile up the hill, turning left into Park. Yet another half mile on 42 nd St gets you to Forest Hill Ave, which has restaurants, etc (we are not planning a group stop at a restaurant).

From Reedy/Buttermilk to Pony Pasture Rapids/Wetlands:

Right onto Riverside Dr (heading upstream).

Left at stop sign onto Evelyn-Byrd Road and go 0.2 mile.

Left onto Westover Hills Blvd and go 0.4 mile

Right at light onto Forest Hill Ave.

Right onto small Rhettig Road (first turn after Willow Oaks Country Club and Powwhite Pkwy)

Left onto Winchester Drive (changes to Buckhill Dr after sharp curve).

Continue about a mile to Landria Drive.

Right at Landria Drive and park by entrance gate.

At Pony Pasture Rapids/Wetlands we have a one-mile walk on flat terrain through a muddy meadow, woods, and stop at a pond with bird blinds. No toilet is on this pathway.

From Pony Pasture Rapids to Belle Isle:

Return to Forest Hill Avenue and turn left (traffic may require you to first turn right and then make U turn using side street).

Left from Forest Hill Avenue onto narrow 42nd street.

Right at Riverside Dr

Right at 22 nd St (multi-story apartments visible), park on street, leave no valuables in passenger compartment.

Walk across Riverside Dr and meet in carpark (it may be open for use on weekend). *The trail to Belle Isle uses an old footbridge over boulders and rapids; the approach includes a few points that are rough and steep.* I have not checked the status of the toilets at Belle Isle.

HRBC observed 57 species on the May 2013 field trip to the James River Park system. Here are the 16 warbler species we saw there last year:

Ovenbird
Black-and-white Warbler
Prothonotary Warbler
Kentucky Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Hooded Warbler

American Redstart
Magnolia Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler

Black-throated Blue Warbler
Pine Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Prairie Warbler

Had enough about a field trip to Richmond spanning 3 pages and ending with a warbler list from May of last year? Then consider a better field trip, like the **HRBC Picnic** in Newport News Park on June 14, 2014, which kicks off with bird walk led by Meredith and Lee Bell. The Bells organized the special excursions for the statewide VSO this year. And the HRBC Picnic provides social and political opportunities, too, just like the Shad Planking attended by Virginia's real time politicians. For example, in the photo below from last year's HRBC Picnic, Pete Peterman is giving flying instructions to an actual President. While I've never seen that President fly further than a foot, there are some *other* Presidents that I have a mind to send flying outside our atmosphere. Let's join forces at the HRBC Picnic on June 14 and promote birds, the flying masters of nature.



Photo by George Boyles

Report of Field Trip to Dutch Gap and Malvern Hill (3/15/14)

Our field trip to Dutch Gap Conservation Area in Chester on March 15, 2014, served, in a manner of speaking, as a preface to future enjoyment. Ownership of that land has been usurped multiple times, residents and grounds have been alternately set to good purpose and ravaged, but contemporary environmental mitigation has given us a place to reflect on nature - and experience some fine birding. Most of us drove past the belching Chesterfield Power Station intending to first park in the lot for the Citie of Henricus (aka Henry, Prince of Wales and son of King James), a representation of the circa 1611 English settlement. We were waylaid enroute by the attentions of two other bird clubs which had stopped at a surprisingly idyllic wetland to view Eagle, numerous Coots, Shovelers and Widgeons, and a beaver lodge. Walt Harris's photo from the wetland (formerly the main channel of the James River, mostly filled by industry in the 20th century) follows.



American Coot and Northern Shoveler at Dutch Gap by Walter Harris

Reaching the intended starting point for our walk, a great, steep, fenced Mount Trashmore-like mound loomed nearby as an ugly distraction. Seeking exhilaration by bird rather than landscape, Dave Youker and Bill Boeh insisted on scrambling up; their followers were rewarded as they saw Ring-necked Duck, Buffleheads, more Northern Shovelers and Canada Geese in the flyash pond at the top. We next covered a mile of Dutch Gap's four-mile trail. Sycamore Spur provided a long vista of muddy flats and the original river channel; Jane Frigo, Virginia Boyles and John Adair deliberated



on whether telescopes revealed Short-billed Dowitcher or Wilson's Snipe – and decided on both. Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal were seen before we returned to the visitor's center for lunch. We'd also heard and seen Pine Warbler and Ruby-crowned Kinglet on the way back. The lunch picture has John Adair, Bill Ferris, Pete and Charm Peterman, Marilyn Adair, Dave Youker, Virginia Boyles, Tracy Tate, George Boyles, Bill Boeh, Jane Frigo, and Phyllis Roth (missing Walt and Gwen Harris and Tom Charlock).

Our party did not view the actual James River “Gap”, which was begun by the labor of Union colored troops hoping to pioneer a route free from Confederate batteries. Bird loving took us to another Civil War site, Malvern Hill, downstream and further north. Malvern Hill has mile-long stretches of field that are completely clear of trees. As predicted, the wind had picked up; and there we saw little. A Northern Harrier at low level lifted group morale. The mercury was now pushing 70 on this partly cloudy day. Slowly walking along the border of a field, Tracy Tate and Dave Youker called out a Horned Lark; perhaps they were soon silently snickering while the “more challenged of us” responded by fruitlessly chasing through sharp crop stubble for a solid look at the persistently evasive creature.

Species list (57) for Dutch Gap and Malvern Hill (3/15/14):

Canada Goose	American Coot	White-breasted Nuthatch
Wood Duck	Killdeer	Brown Creeper
American Wigeon	Short-billed Dowitcher	Carolina Wren
Mallard	Wilson's Snipe	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-winged Teal	Ring-billed Gull	Eastern Bluebird
Northern Shoveler	Mourning Dove	American Robin
Green-winged Teal	Belted Kingfisher	Northern Mockingbird
Ring-necked Duck	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher
Lesser Scaup	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	European Starling
Bufflehead	Downy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Ruddy Duck	Pileated Woodpecker	Pine Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Eastern Phoebe	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Blue Jay	Savannah Sparrow
Great Egret	American Crow	Song Sparrow
Black Vulture	Fish Crow	White-throated Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Horned Lark	Dark-eyed Junco
Osprey	Tree Swallow	Northern Cardinal
Bald Eagle	Carolina Chickadee	Red-winged Blackbird
Northern Harrier	Tufted Titmouse	Eastern Meadowlark

Report of Field Trip to Great Dismal Swamp (4/12/14)

Fifteen of us drove into the Jericho Lane entrance of the Great Dismal Swamp at 8 AM on April 12, 2014. It was about 60 degrees and later warmed into the 70s. Cloud cover was only light, bug cover was light, and so were the southerly winds. Seasonal green up seemed to advance by the hour. Some version of, “Lucky that we beat the leaf camouflage this year”, ran through various heads. The intersection of Lynn, Jericho and Hudnell Ditches was however disappointingly spare at first. A few of us mistook frog noises for the sound of Clapper Rail. Bill Ferris spotted three Wild Turkeys about a quarter mile to the south along Lynn Ditch; scopes showed a proud male in full display for hens, but air turbulence made it impossible to pick out his colors. Dot Silsby provided brief tutorials on the calls of the warblers that we heard - but for the most part they quickly hid from sight in the brush. It was only back at the ditch intersection that a Prairie Warbler finally both sang and posed steadily close by, allowing spectacular views through a telescope.

A distant Northern Harrier heralded our approach to Washington Ditch. The trees at the border of the Swamp rang like the jackpot of the warbler lottery. Black and White, Prothonotary and Northern Parula, and others

revealed their places in the canopy, flew off, and then courteously returned. We were thus quite optimistic at the prospect of a similar performance when starting on the nearby boardwalk, but there saw little beyond a Black Snake and Painted Turtle. Nearing the end of the boardwalk, Stuart Sweetman and Jane Frigo led half of the group on a full reverse march; the others pressed on toward Washington Ditch itself. About 15 minutes later, excited gestures and waves from the “others” brought the reversers to their grand find, a cluster of tall trees just south of the Ditch bearing cooperative Hooded , Black and White, and Prothonotary Warblers, and Common Yellowthroats. We enjoyed the best views and calls of the day. Apparent moral of story: spend time at the very borders of Swamp, avoid boardwalk, and focus on the elevated roadway along Washington Ditch itself.

Photo from the interior of the Great Dismal Swamp showing, from left to right, Bill Ferris, Libby Carmines, Stuart Sweetman, Paul Roth, Lorraine Austin, Phyllis Roth, Michelle Scott, Jane Frigo, Sandy Robertson, Dot Silsby, Bill Boeh, Joyce Williams, Mike Lowry, and Hayes Williams (Tom Charlock not in picture).



Species list (58) for Great Dismal Swamp (4/12/14):

Canada Goose	Northern Flicker	Black-and-white Warbler
Wood Duck	Pileated Woodpecker	Prothonotary Warbler
Wild Turkey	Great Crested Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Double-crested Cormorant	White-eyed Vireo	Hooded Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Red-eyed Vireo	American Redstart
Black Vulture	American Crow	Northern Parula
Turkey Vulture	Fish Crow	Palm Warbler
Osprey	Purple Martin	Pine Warbler
Bald Eagle	Carolina Chickadee	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Northern Harrier	Tufted Titmouse	Yellow-throated Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Prairie Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Carolina Wren	Eastern Towhee
Red-tailed Hawk	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Chipping Sparrow
Killdeer	Hermit Thrush	White-throated Sparrow
Laughing Gull	Wood Thrush	Northern Cardinal
Rock Pigeon	American Robin	Red-winged Blackbird
Mourning Dove	Gray Catbird	Common Grackle
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Northern Mockingbird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Ovenbird	
Downy Woodpecker	Louisiana Waterthrush	

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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 Hidenwood Shopping Center, Newport News, VA, or at Wild Birds in The Pavilion Shops in Kiln Creek.

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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