



# Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

**Hampton Roads Bird Club**

[www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org](http://www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org)

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Vol. 63, No. 3

January/February 2015

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**January 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting**  
**6:30 PM Social    7:00 PM Program**  
at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

**Dr. Shawn T. Dash**  
**"Winter Ecology"**

This presentation will describe aspects of the winter ecology of birds, mammals, reptiles and insects in the mid Atlantic coastal region. Shawn is a new club member, an active researcher and mentor as Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences at Hampton University, a lifelong avid naturalist, and a very dynamic speaker.

**Hosted by** Bill Ferris, Rochelle Colestock, and Becky Rose

**February 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting**  
**6:30 PM Social    7:00 PM Program**  
at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

**Delores Freeman**  
**"Birding the Great Dismal Swamp"**

Delores Freeman is perhaps best known as veteran organizer and guide of the annual Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival; the next will be held April 23-25 as part of International Migratory Bird Day. Her presentation will be fine background material for our own HRBC field trip to the Dismal Swamp on April 11.

**Hosted by** Vicki Youker, Brenda Gervais, and Virginia Boyles

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## HRBC Outdoors January-February

**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](mailto:birderjane@gmail.com)  
757-873-0721)

**Field Trip to Back Bay on Jan. 10** (see page 2)  
Contact Andy Hawkins  
([andrewcurtishawkins@gmail.com](mailto:andrewcurtishawkins@gmail.com)  
[757-833-0371](tel:757-833-0371) or cell [757-870-9641](tel:757-870-9641))

**Field Trip to CBBT Islands on Feb 14** (see page 2)  
Contact Stuart Sweetman ([nnva4x4@aol.com](mailto:nnva4x4@aol.com)  
[757-595-1677](tel:757-595-1677))

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## President's Perch

By Dave Youker

Renew your passion for birding! If you don't look forward to the next bird count, field trip, club meeting or just starting your new yearly list, then it's time to renew your passion for birding. Remember what got you into birding to start. Was it the social or conservation aspect? Or the desire to commune with nature, just marveling at the beauty and behavior of our feathered friends? Whatever the reason, it's time to refocus ourselves. Too often we get caught-up in the organization of it all and forget to just enjoy the pleasure of birding. Like many of you, I just like being around other birders doing and talking about the interest we all share. I can enjoy discussing or observing a local bird as much as a rare visitor (well, maybe there is a little more with a rare bird). So as we turn the calendar to start the New Year, it's a great time to get back to the basics of enjoying the birding experience.

## Field Trip to Back Bay and False Cape State Park

**Saturday, 7:00 AM, Jan. 10, 2015**

By Andy Hawkins

On Jan. 10th we will meet at Bass Pro in Hampton at 7:00 AM and leave at 7:15 AM for Little Island Park at 3820 Sandpiper Rd, Va. Beach, Va. We will meet at Little Island Park near the fishing pier at 8:45 AM. From 9 AM to 1 PM we will tour the Wildlife Refuge and False Cape St. Park via tram. The tram will be open to the air, so dress very warmly. The cost will be \$8.00 per person. The maximum the tram can carry is 24, and as of the Christmas Party many of the spots had been taken.

If you are interested, we are taking club member signups first come. After 24 people sign up, you will be added to the waiting list; I would then contact you the week before, if there are any cancellations. If you have signed up and cannot make the trip, please email me; I would then take you off the list, so others might attend. For signups or questions, email me at [andrewcurtishawkins@gmail.com](mailto:andrewcurtishawkins@gmail.com) or call me at 757-833-0371 or cell 757-870-9641.

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## Field Trip to Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands and Upper Eastern Shore

**Saturday, 8:00 AM, Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2015**

By Stuart Sweetman

Our February field trip will be to the Tunnel Islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the upper middle part of The Eastern Shore of Virginia. As normal this trip is a permission based trip including a ten dollar fee and a written permission slip made out to the CBBT. Permission slips will be made available at up-coming meetings. There is a limit of 15 slots available with HRBC members to fill the slots first. Members and non-members wishing to go can also be put on a standby list. The group will meet at the south toll plaza at 7:30 AM and form carpool groups. We start our trip at 8:00 AM and visit the restricted Islands #2, #3 and #4 with our escort. We

will finish the Tunnel Island portion of our trip around noon. The whole group will then drive north up route 13 to Willis Wharf, where we will bird the area and take our lunch break. After birding the wharf we will head back south to the town of Cape Charles. At Cape Charles we will visit and bird the Public Beach and Resort Area. If time permits we will stop by Island #1 of the CBBT for a pit stop and a little birding on our way back home. Sign-ups will be at the next couple meetings and any questions regarding this trip will be answered at the meetings or drop me an email at [NNVA4x4@aol.com](mailto:NNVA4x4@aol.com)

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## Lights Still Shining Inside Us from Holiday Dinner Party

By Virginia Boyles



*Brenda and Joe Gervais draw winners of the raffle*

What happens when your dinner invitation garners a RSVP people count of 36, and then 58 of 'em show up? You offer a big "Thank You" to all of the

people who helped make the Holiday Party such a success. The puzzle game that Katrina Dash presented challenged us to learn new details about birds, and the raffle Brenda Gervais organized raised \$121 for our club. Lynn Chandler, John and Marilyn Adair, Mark Nichols, Gwen Harris, and Pete Peterman also helped with decorations, setting up the room, and cleaning afterward. Club members had arrived at the December 11, Sandy Bottom, event with their own special dishes to share.



Shawn (Jan. speaker) and Katrina (Dec. puzzle maker) Dash

The appetizer table was overseen by veteran Dot Silsby and got us in the mood to party. Nancy Gruttman-Tyler presented Dot with a painting (by Nancy) of the Silsby house, in appreciation for Dot's long service to the cause of birding throughout the Old Dominion (too much service to list here, but it included a founding role for the Kiptopeke Hawk Watch).



Nancy Gruttman Tyler, Dot Silsby, and Dave Youker

Our clean up volunteers found some extra serving flatware pieces and report (as of this writing) *a silver butter knife as missing. If anyone ended up with things they need to return, please bring such to the January meeting.* Overall, it had to be the best party of the season.

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“Best party of the season?” One Jack Daw agreed but squawked in comment that the HRBC evening follow-up to another event, the **Audubon Christmas Bird Count**, turned out to be littler but wetter. Nancy Gruttman-Tyler led the Club's day-long, annual effort on December 20, 2014. HRBC had the Lower Peninsula covered by 13 sectors, each having a small team. Nancy's sector leaders were Bill Ferris, Brenda Gervais, Cary Koronas, Nick Flanders, Clark White, Jane Frigo, Meredith Bell, Bill Boeh, Elisa Enders, Dave Youker, Cathy Bond, Bettye Fields, and Geoff Giles. Most sector leaders convened at Dot Silsby's house after dark for the compilation.

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## **Indian River Park - A Southside Birding Site**

By Emily Shirk

There's a bird-watching paradise in Hampton Roads and it's closer than you think. Welcome to Indian River Park, a ninety-acre forest boasting trees more than one hundred years old. With its unique wildlife and peaceful surroundings, it's hard to imagine such a park would be easily accessible. Believe it or not, the park is nestled between Military Highway and Interstate 64, but its greenery acts as a noise blocker of sorts. With a freshly marked 3.2 mile trail, it's a hidden gem located in plain sight. Indian River Park is located at 1709 Rokeby Avenue in Chesapeake.

*Emily Shirk is a Girl Scout about to complete her Gold Award (equivalent to Eagle Scout). For her project, she blazed the outer trail at Indian River Park to make it more easily identifiable to hikers.*

# Report of Field Trip to Grandview Nature Preserve in Hampton (11/15/14)

By Stuart Sweetman

Our group met at State Park Drive in Hampton to cold and windy conditions. Air temps. were in the forty's under cloudy skies. The group of 13 headed out to the beach and soon realized that it's always a safe bet to drop the beach temp. by at least 10 degrees from what it was back at the road. That means it was COLD. The brisk wind limited the bird activity along the trail to the beach, but slowly our numbers increased the further we walked down the beach.



*John Adair points out an expired Portuguese Man of War*

Beach goers were: Stuart Sweetman, Cindy Schulz, Jordan Hogg, Virginia Boyles, Pete Peterman, Bill Boeh, John Adair, Marilyn Adair, Angie Herring, Tom Charlock, Nancy Gruttman-Tyler, Ernie Miller, and Jessica Rodgers.

**Species list on next page.**



*Nancy, Angie, Marilyn and Cindy increase the species count by shooing away a bothersome photographer*

About half way down part of the group dropped off and headed back as the heartiest 8 of us made it down to the end where the channel is. By the time we got down to this point the wind had died down and the sun brought the temp. up into the mid fifties. Shore birds were up and down the beach with great looks of Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers. Savannah Sparrows were numerous among the dunes at the North Point and at least one Ipswich Sparrow was found and photographed by Ernie Miller. The day turned out to be quite nice on the way back down the beach with sunny skies and just a slight breeze. Common Loons were fishing just 25 feet from shore and Forster's Terns were working the waves. For those of us that endured the five plus miles of walking, we ended up with 47 species for the day.



*Le Harle (Common Merganser) by Leclerc (not seen 11/15/14)*

Species list from HRBC field trip to Grandview Nature Preserve in Hampton (11/15/14)

Canada Goose  
Mallard  
Surf Scoter  
Black Scoter  
Bufflehead  
Red-breasted Merganser  
Red-throated Loon  
Common Loon  
Horned Grebe  
Northern Gannet  
Brown Pelican  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Great Blue Heron  
Bald Eagle  
Northern Harrier  
Black Vulture

Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Black-bellied Plover  
Semiplamated Plover  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Ruddy Turnstone  
Sanderling  
Western Sandpiper  
Dunlin  
Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Forester's Tern  
Mourning Dove  
Belted Kingfisher  
American Crow  
Tree Swallow  
Northern Flicker

Carolina Chickadee  
Carolina Wren  
American Robin  
Northern Mockingbird  
European Starling  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Savannah Sparrow  
Ipswich Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Red-winged Blackbird  
House Finch  
American Goldfinch



L'Etourneau (Starling) by Leclerc (and seen 11/15/14)

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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 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>. **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.

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### 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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