



# Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

**Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC)**

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

Vol. 72, No. 3

January-February 2024

**NO Jan. 11 Meeting at Sandy Bottom!**  
The City of Hampton has other plans.

**Monitor your email for a ZOOM event  
at 7:00 PM on Thurs., Jan. 11**

**Birds of Australia and New Guinea**

By Pete Peterman

## Snacks at HRBC meetings from Jane Frigo

Thanks to all of you who have brought snacks for our meetings. Your efforts have truly been appreciated.

Now I must ask for help bringing snacks for the remainder of the year. We need volunteers for February, March, April and May. A sign up will be available at the next meeting. Jane Frigo  
[birderjane@gmail.com](mailto:birderjane@gmail.com) home 757-873-0721, cell 757-776-7925



Little Senegal Sparrow (by Georges-Louis Leclerc)

**Thurs., Feb. 8**  
**6:30 PM Social**      **Meeting**  
**7:00 PM Program**  
Sandy Bottom Nature Park  
Program to be determined

## HRBC Outdoors

**Regular Bird Walks in Newport News Park**  
7:00 AM on 1st and 3rd Sundays of all 12 months, unless the city schedules a special mass event.  
**No Bird Walk on Mar. 3, 2024** (Marathon race).  
Meet at big parking lot behind Ranger Station.  
Leader: Jane Frigo [birderjane@gmail.com](mailto:birderjane@gmail.com)  
home 757-873-0721, cell 757-776-7925

## CBBT Islands

Saturday, January 13, 2024  
Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)  
757-320-9191 (text or phone)  
This trip is filled. Participants will be advised of key details directly by James Abbott.

## NN Park Winter Bird Count (see page 2)

7:00 AM Saturday, January 27, 2024  
Main leader: Jane Frigo [birderjane@gmail.com](mailto:birderjane@gmail.com)  
home 757-873-0721, cell 757-776-7925

## Back Bay Tram and False Cape (see page 2)

Saturday, February 10, 2024  
Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)  
757-320-9191 (text or phone)

## Hog Island Wildlife Management Area

Saturday, March 23, 2024  
Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)  
757-320-9191 (text or phone)

## Great Dismal Swamp

Sunday, April 21, 2024

Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)

757-320-9191 (text or phone)

## Greensprings / Powhatan Creek Trails

Saturday, May 11, 2024

Leader: James Abbott [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com)

757-320-9191 (text or phone)

## Newport News Park Winter Sector Bird Count 7:00AM Saturday, Jan. 24, 2024

By Jane Frigo

The Hampton Roads Bird Club is going to continue the Newport News Park Winter Bird Count. This count is like the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) where NUMBERS of individual species are counted. Since Newport News Park does not fall into any CBC circles and the regular twice-monthly Sunday walks only track species, not numbers of individuals (unless Bill Boeh is present and keeps and ebird record), this activity can provide information about the health of populations. This year's count will be held on January 27, 2024. The Saturday date is being chosen to encourage participation by those club members who are unable to attend the regular Sunday walks,

As in previous years, there will be 5 sectors each with a leader who is responsible for keeping the count on their ebird account and then sharing it with the club's account: HRBC1951. Bill Boeh, our club compiler, will then access the information from all 5 sectors. The sectors are:

Section 1: Campground/Archery/Power lines

Section 2: West of Constitution Ave  
Ranger Station/Lakeside

Section 3: East of Constitution Ave  
Arboretum/Discovery Center

Section 4: White Oak Trail  
Dam Bridge/White Oak Trail  
Swamp Bridge to Spawning  
Pond

Section 5: Golf Course/Bluebird Trail

Arrange for cart/sent results

I will have a sign up at both meetings or you can contact me by phone (757-873-0721), cell/text (757-776-7925), or email ([birderjane@gmail.com](mailto:birderjane@gmail.com)) if you are interested. Indicate the selection you would prefer and if you would be willing to keep the ebird list. Participants will meet at the large shelter by the Ranger Station at 7:00 AM to review assignments. The group will return to the shelter by 10:00 AM and share the morning's sightings. I will provide coffee, donuts and bagels. This is an easy, fun activity.

## Field Trip to Back Bay and False Cape State Park 8:30 AM Saturday, Feb. 10, 2024

By James Abbott

On Saturday February 10 the HRBC Back Bay Tram Ride Returns! We have reserved the tram from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Arrive at the Back Bay Visitors Center by 8:30 AM. As in years past this trip has a fee of \$8.00 **CASH ONLY**. Please bring it with you to the Visitor Center. This trip also has a capacity limit of 24 participants. The deadline to sign up is January 26, but don't delay, because sign up will be opened to non-club members on January 15.

We'll leave Back Bay Visitors Center at 9:00 AM and ride the tram to False Cape State Park. Next comes a short hike to the beach, and then the tram ride back. This will be an opportunity to see many winter waterfowl especially Tundra Swan along with loons, ibis, rails, and shorebirds. We'll have short hikes around the Visitor Center before or after the tram ride, as well as at Little Island Pier to have a chance to see Northern Gannet and Razorbill.

The tram is open and WILL be cold, dress accordingly in layers and bring blankets. A snack and drinks are a good idea as well. To sign up for this trip please send an email to [jaa3469@gmail.com](mailto:jaa3469@gmail.com). If you can no longer make it for any reason, please let me know so I can update availability. I will send you a confirmation email and have emails sent out to the club with updated availability of seats.

## Holiday Party Photos from December 14, 2023

Hospitality chief Jane Frigo wrangled Keith and Blake Frigo, John and Marilyn Adair, and Tom Charlock to set up tables and decorations in the afternoon. Keith provided memorable sea stories, one about the crunch of a submarine into an undersea mountain. He returned as part of the evening's welcoming committee shown below.



Food at last with Anne Boeh, Evelyn Sopko by her presiding VP Mark, Charlotte Boudreau, and Tina White. Background has Bill Boeh, Angie Herring, Marilyn Adair, Vicky and Dave Youker, Dianne Snyder, Lee Morris, Keith Frigo, Ryan Walsh, and Jane Frigo's arm.



Jeanne Atkins, Tina White, Keith Frigo, Dianne Snyder, Brenda and C. L. Tanner

There was a special presentation of an anonymous gift to Jane Frigo, HRBC's Wonder Woman who runs the Sunday bird walks in Newport News Park, the Park Winter Bird Count, club Hospitality, and... and... The gift was a certificate for dinner at Al Freco restaurant on Jefferson Avenue, near Jane's house. She appreciates it very much.



The Three Wise Men talking about birds are Mark Sopko, James Abbott, and Ryan Walsh



Jane Frigo (photo cropped by Dianne Snyder)



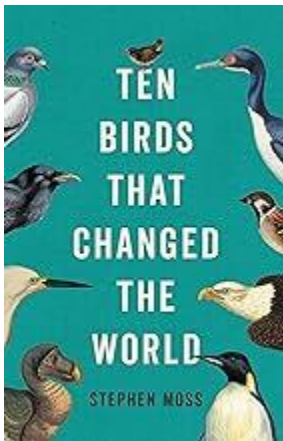


“And to all a good night” from Keith Frigo, Stuart Sweetman, and Susan Morris (by Dianne Snyder)

## Review of Stephen Moss’s “Ten Birds that Changed the World”

By Pete Peterman

I received this book as an early Christmas present and was skeptical that the birds selected had actually changed the world or if accepting that birds could actually change the world, why only these ten? The



author is Stephen Moss, an award-winning wildlife television producer for the BBC Natural History Unit and author of over forty books and guides. The book is extensively researched and footnoted and he did change my skepticism that there are birds that have so greatly influenced world culture and have reflected environmental changes that

their effects should be noted. However, especially with the effects of climate change, in my opinion, there are other species that could have been listed. The author’s intention was to list ten birds, each relating to a fundamental aspect of our humanity: mythology, communications, food and family, extinction, evolution, agriculture, conservation, politics, hubris, and the climate emergency. He succeeded in tying his selection to each of these aspects.

His first chapter is on the Raven, the largest member of the Corvid family, who is part of many indigenous people’s creation myths and was the first bird sent out by Noah from the Ark. The second

chapter covers the Rock Dove (feral Pigeon), originally bred for food but later prized for its extraordinary ability to carry messages over long distances, helping to win battles and change events during the two world wars. Domesticated birds provide not just food, but spiritual and social sustenance too such as the Wild Turkey. Now raised on an industrial scale, the question is raised as to whether we have a right to exploit other living creatures for our own needs. For extinction, the Dodo was chosen as the icon that maybe able to teach us useful lessons about our problematic relationship with endangered species. Darwin Finches was chosen for evolution even though Darwin didn’t mention the finches when he did finally publish “On the Origin of Species.” It was the research that followed, specifically the research of Peter and Rosemary Grant since the 1970s that have shown that evolution can happen very quickly, not necessarily decades.

For agriculture, the Guanay Cormorant was chosen because of the guano produced and found that this substance could be used as fertilizer enabling intensive farming needed to feed a growing world population. Since this is a limited resource, it spurred development of synthetic fertilizers which are used today. The Snowy Egret was chosen as the species that spurred the development of conservation organizations like Audubon in the USA and the Royal Society for the Preservation of Birds in Britain. The feather trade for woman’s fashion had caused the near extinction of this species. The Bald Eagle was chosen for politics as the eagle symbol has been used by the Greeks, Romans, Holy Roman Empire, Russia and the US. But there is a darker side as well as it was also used by Nazi Germany and now by supporters of the far right. Of surprise to me was this next to last chapter on China’s Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution where he declared that the Tree Sparrow had to be eradicated. Although he failed to eliminate this species, his action ultimately led to the deaths of tens of millions of his own people. The last chapter is on the Emperor Penguin as an example of the threat that the author refers to as the climate emergency. There are more species that are threatened as the change occurs to our climate.

I found the book informative and very readable and highly recommend adding it to your list of must read books.

## Winter Photo Contest Winners

By Michael Meyer

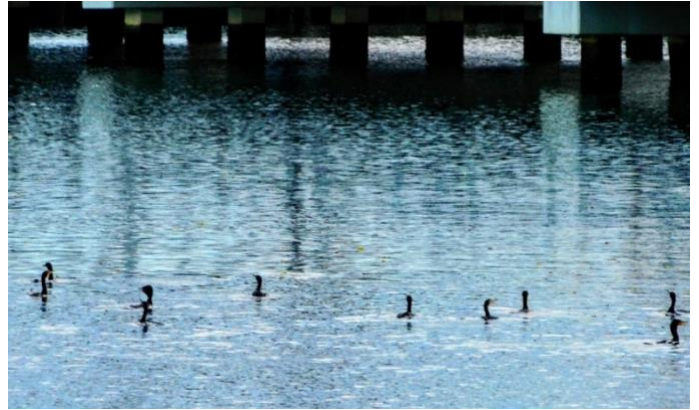
### November



Tri-colored Heron  
Gold by Laura Mae

Laura: "This Tri-colored Heron was joined by a Great Blue Heron near Black Duck Marsh at Chincoteague NWR in September. Great Egrets, a Little Blue Heron and Cattle Egrets were nearby. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S149285246> "

National Park which is outside the capital of Port Moresby. I used a Nikon Z-50 with a NIKKOR 200-400 lens with a 1.4x extender for a total of 560mm. It was taken at f 11 at 1/80 of a second with an ISO of 450. The bird was moving thru the trees, hence the stretched out neck and flowing plumes."



Double-crested Cormorants  
Bronze by Lynn Chandler

Lynn: "Saturday October 21 at 7:08 AM there were not two or four Double-crested Cormorants on my creek BUT **ten** of them feeding all at one time; in the twenty-five years I have lived here I have NEVER seen this many Cormorants at one time on Salter's Creek in downtown Hampton! They are so fast and very difficult to photograph."



Raggiana Bird of Paradise  
Silver by Pete Peterman

Pete: "The Raggiana Bird of Paradise is the national bird of Papua New Guinea. This is the male. The female was hidden in a nearby tree sitting on her eggs. The photo was taken on Sep 30 at Varirata

### December



Barred Owl  
Gold by Pete Peterman

Pete: "The Barred Owl was taken on Dec. 3 at NN Park on the White Oak Trail at the first overlook



going north from the spawning pond. I used a Nikon D500 with a 200-500mm lens at f 5.6 and 1/1000 of a second and an ISO of 3200. The Barred was not concerned with us looking at him and was more interested in looking down in the swampy grass for critters. There were several Swamp Sparrows when we first came upon him that were fussing but they soon left.”



Brown-headed Nuthatch  
Bronze by Pete Peterman



Great Blue Heron  
Silver by Lynn Chandler

Lynn: “Thursday November 9 at 2:00 PM my Great Blue Heron was strutting himself across the floating dock with his very large late lunch for the day! He was so proud of himself and amazing to watch as he devoured the large fish!”

Pete: “The Brown-headed Nuthatch was taken on Nov. 5 at NN Park at the Arboretum. I used a Nikon D500 with a 200-500mm lens at f 5.6 and 1/1000 of a second and an ISO of 3200. One of the birders in the group wanted an opportunity to photograph a Brown-headed Nuthatch and this bird responded.”

Here are the contest rules:

1. A member may submit up to 2 photos each month taken in the last 60 days.
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. Winners will be contacted by the newsletter editor to provide either a short writeup or a brief phone interview from which a narrative may be composed.

## Reports for Sunday Walks in Newport News Park and Field Trips

By Bill Boeh

Links to eBird reports for November and December 2023 events are below. Each link takes you to the text summary of a HRBC “1st and 3rd” Sunday walk in Newport News Park or field trip, the number of individuals seen for each species, and the associated eBird checklist(s).

Checklists often have photos. A hearty thanks to Jane Frigo (Sunday walk leader) and James Abbott (field trip leader)

Links to eBird reports from the Christmas Bird Count and the December 17 NN park walk are not complete yet; links will be provided in the next newsletter.

*Nov. 11 was a field trip to Grandview Beach*

Date	Species Obs.	Report Link
Nov. 5	51	<a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/166578">https://ebird.org/tripreport/166578</a>
<i>Nov. 11</i>	55	<a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/160557">https://ebird.org/tripreport/160557</a>
Nov. 19	53	<a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/172778">https://ebird.org/tripreport/172778</a>
Dec. 3	55	<a href="https://ebird.org/tripreport/166580">https://ebird.org/tripreport/166580</a>

### Bits of Bird Science: Our Radio Waves and the Use of Magnetism by Birds to Migrate

By Jack Daw

Numerous scientific studies have pointed out that some biological systems are influenced by weak magnetic fields. The earth’s magnetic field is used by many songbirds for long distance migration. Radio is an electromagnetic wave. Are our radio transmissions messing up songbird migration? A readable piece on the popular ScienceDaily website (August 28, 2023) suggests that the high frequency transmissions of our mobile devices (well above 116 megahertz, for example) “would only have a weak effect on the bird’s magnetic orientation”. Lower frequencies like AM radio, which is even generated by more routine household electrical appliances, are likely problematic. More research by Profs. Henrik Mouriten and Peter Hore is needed.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/08/230828130356.htm>

Electromagnetism was described by James Clerk Maxwell in 1865 with 12 differential equations; physicists abbreviated them to a more useful 4. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Lorentz transformation and Einstein’s special theory of relativity showed just how magnetic force is generated – by the motion of electric charge. But how can the very weak energy of terrestrial magnetism affect animals, which are engines of much, much greater thermal energy? This is being explored using highly intricate quantum mechanical calculations and the “radical pair mechanism”. Do songbirds see the magnetic field?

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Red-tailed Hawk accidentally ensnared in an artifact of classic American sports culture: the batting cage adjacent to Gildersleeve Middle School.



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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) 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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