



Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

Hampton Roads Bird Club

www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org

Vol. 63, No. 2

November/December 2014

November 13th Meeting
6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program
at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

December 11th Meeting
6:30 PM Holiday Dinner Party
at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

Mary Elfner
"Team Wood Thrush"

Mary Elfner of the Virginia Audubon Council is the coordinator for Team Wood Thrush. Team Wood Thrush is a Virginia Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program that provides vital experiential and online learning to middle school students, teachers and families regarding a common species in decline - the Wood Thrush - and its habitat. Join us to find out how this program is making citizen scientists out of children and adults alike.

Hosted by Phyllis Roth, Dot Silsby, and Angie Herring
Meeting information from Brenda Gervais

Planning is already underway for the club's Holiday Party on December 11 at 6:30 at Sandy Bottom Park, so mark your calendars. Members are asked to bring appetizers, vegetable dishes, and desserts. Volunteers will be needed to help with set up and clean up, and to cook the ham and turkey. Watch for the sign up sheet at the November 13th meeting, or contact Virginia Boyles at v.b.boyles@verizon.net (757-867-8857). It's been a good year with lots to celebrate.

Hosted by Gwen and Walter Harris, Lynn Chandler, and Brenda Gervais
Meeting information from Virginia Boyles

HRBC Outdoors November-December

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
Walk Leader: Jane Frigo (birderjane@gmail.com
757-873-0721)

Field Trip to Grandview on Nov. 15 (see page 2)
Contact Stuart Sweetman (nnva4x4@aol.com
757-595-1677)

Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 20 (see page 2)
Contact Nancy Gruttman-Tyler
(gruttmantyler@gmail.com, 757-850-3861)

President's Perch

By Dave Youker

For this newsletter edition, I could write about all the great fall/winter events like Christmas Bird Counts, our Christmas party, or arrival of winter species. Instead, I want to highlight some of the actions our club is supporting. First is the bluebird trail at Deer Run golf course in Newport News Park. This past year we fledged around 250 bluebirds. While this seems like a lot, the numbers are way down from previous years due to higher snake predation. A solution to the snake problem has been implemented, and we hope the bluebird numbers rebound. The second effort is with our IBA (Important Birding Area). With the support of a Governor's School student, we are analyzing the future viability of selected species given the ongoing threat from development and climate change. The initial results should be available in the spring. Finally, we are again supporting an intern to assess the nesting of

[President's Perch continued]

terns and other selected species at three prominent nesting sites around the Hampton Roads area. These are just a few examples of how our club continues to have a positive effect on the local avian population.

Field Trip to Grandview Nature Preserve in Hampton

Saturday, 8:00 AM, Nov. 15, 2014

By Stuart Sweetman

Our November field trip will be to Grandview Nature Preserve located at the end of State Park Drive in Hampton, Virginia. To reach Grandview Beach, take Mercury Blvd. to Fox Hill Road, and turn onto Beach Road on the left. Follow Beach Road all the way to its end, where there will be a round-a-bout. State Park Road is on the left. Cars park on the right side curb near the end of the road. The group will meet at 7:30 am and start our hike around 8:00 am. We will be walking the whole length of the beach to the North End Point. There are no toilet facilities, so we will "rough it". This is mostly a beach walking trip so wear appropriate shoes. Possible bird sightings for this trip might include Marsh and Sedge Wrens, migrating Sandpipers and Plovers as well as ducks that might have returned for the winter.

A sign-up sheet will be at the November meeting. Those wishing to attend the trip can also contact Stuart Sweetman at NNVA4x4@aol.com or leave a message at my home number 757-595-1677.

115th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 20, 2014

(from Meredith Bell's HRBC web page)

Nancy Grutman-Tyler coordinates the Newport News/Hampton portion of this, the longest-running

citizen science survey in the world. Your eyes and ears are needed, and you don't have to be an experienced birder to participate. The area is divided into 13 sectors, with an experienced leader for each. Most sectors count from 7:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Sign up at the November 13th meeting or contact Nancy (850-3861 or grutmantyl@gmail.com) to see which sectors need coverage.



Barred Owl (by Stuart Sweetman)

The Barred Owl above was seen during the Sunday Birdwalk in Newport News Park led by Jane Frigo on 10/19/14. Stuart Sweetman snapped it with his cell phone through Mike Lowry's spotting scope. "The owl was seen off the left side of the trail to the swamp bridge just past the swamp overlook."



Rose-breasted Grosbeak (local photo by Bill Boeh on 10/13/14)

Note from the Treasurer

By John Adair

Many thanks to the majority of members who have paid your dues on time this club year that began September 1st. The information provided with your renewal (e.g., address, phone, and email) is used to update the Membership roster. The roster will be distributed to the membership in November, in time for sending your holiday greetings. The roster will also indicate when each membership payment is next due (paying for advanced years is now allowed). If you have any questions, please contact the treasurer.

You can pay your dues at a club meeting or the following: 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. Dues remain \$15 for single individuals and \$20 for families.



Le Rubis-émeraude, Georges-Louis Leclerc

Two months in brief Afterward ever briefer

Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC) in regular font

Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) and Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) in italics

Sunday, November 2	Birdwalk in Newport News Park, 7 AM
<i>Saturday, November 8</i>	<i>WBC birdwalk, New Quarter Park, 8 AM</i>
Thursday, November 13	Meeting at Sandy Bottom, 6:30 PM
Saturday, November 15	Field trip to Grandview Beach, 8 AM
Sunday, November 16	Birdwalk in Newport News Park, 7 AM
<i>Saturday, November 22</i>	<i>WBC birdwalk, New Quarter Park, 7 AM</i>
<i>Friday-Sunday, December 5-7</i>	<i>VSO field trip to Virginia Beach</i>
Sunday, December 7	Birdwalk in Newport News Park, 7 AM
Thursday, December 11	Holiday Party at Sandy Bottom, 6:30 PM
<i>Saturday, December 13</i>	<i>WBC birdwalk, New Quarter Park, 8 AM</i>
<i>Sunday, December 14</i>	<i>WBC bird count</i>
Saturday, December 20	HRBC Audubon Christmas Bird Count , 7 AM
Sunday, December 21	Birdwalk in Newport News Park, 7 AM
<i>Saturday, December 27</i>	<i>WBC birdwalk, New Quarter Park, 7 AM</i>
Jan. 10, 2015	Fieldtrip to Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge
<i>Feb. 6-8, 2015</i>	<i>VSO fieldtrip to Outer Banks</i>
Feb. 14, 2015	Fieldtrip to Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands
Mar. 14, 2015	Fieldtrip to Craney Island
Apr. 11, 2015	Fieldtrip to Great Dismal Swamp
May 16, 2015	Fieldtrip to Richmond's James River Parks
Jun, 13, 2015	Club picnic in Newport News Park

HRBC and WBC will continue their meetings, twice-per-month birdwalks, etc., in 2015.

Contact WBC and VSO for information on their field trips and other events.

Report of Field Trip to Hog Island and Ragged Island Wildlife Management Areas (9/13/14)

By Stuart Sweetman

Our group met at Huntington Beach to sunny skies. A quick head count was done and our 5 cars headed out for the 45 minute trip to Hog Island. Our trip took us past Smithfield through Isle of Wight County where a group of 6 Wild Turkey were spotted catching a quick breakfast in a cow pasture. Upon arriving at the island we met up with 2 other members, bringing our total to 12. The security check to transit the Surry nuclear power facility seemed to take forever, but we finally made it through and began our first field trip of the season. Pete Peterman and Andy Hawkins were the first to arrive; they'd spooked a roosting Great Horned Owl next to one of the observations points. The whole group stopped at a cut off to take a look at the beach and scan the James River. Bald Eagles were numerous there; and at many other spots along the way. The water was very high in the many lakes and ponds, so migrating shorebirds were nonexistent. But we made up for it in migrating warblers with a total of 8 species. The Yellow Warbler was the most abundant, allowing easy views at many locations throughout the day.



Yellow Warbler (photo by Andy Hawkins)

The group drove to the visitor's center at the end of the road for a quick break and a recharge of water and snacks. Then came a three mile walk around the northeast end of the island past Homewood Creek. The trail was nice and wide and provided easy access for viewing on both sides. Along the trail we stumbled upon a couple of snakes catching a few rays. One was a Black Rat Snake that seemed to freeze when we were checking him out. The other was a Northern Black Racer that was having no part of our stares. He took off like a shot and was gone in a couple seconds. We continued down the trail, hoping to find American White Pelicans which had been reported by an earlier party. We counted 20 swimming near a sandbar out in the creek alongside a hundred or more Caspian Terns. We continued around the back side of the creek for additional views of the pelicans. Just as we carefully scoped, they suddenly took to the air. Such a huge and beautiful bird, yet so graceful in flight. We thought they'd vanish as they flew higher and higher, but we later rediscovered them in a different part of the creek. Near yet another creek, we came across a young Tricolored Heron perched in a decaying tree. He was a dead giveaway with that red neck and white stripe down the front. In a field we obtained good views of a lone Cattle Egret feeding in a patch of water.

The whole group had an enjoyable and productive day, totaling 77 species. Lists of participants and bird species are found on the following page.



: Some of the Islanders: Elisa, Nick, Phyllis, Adam, Pete, Jason, Angie, Stuart, and Jane

The two youngsters on the left, Elisa and Nick, married shortly after the photo was taken.

All of the Islanders: Stuart Sweetman, Cary Koronas, Jane Frigo, Jason Strickland, Adam Bollinger, Angie Herring, Andy Hawkins, Nick Flanders, Elisa Enders, Phyllis Roth. Pete Peterman and Tom Charlock.

Species list for HRBC field trip to Hog Island WMA and Ragged Island WMA (9/13/14)

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|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Canada Goose | Caspian Tern | Carolina Wren |
| American Black Duck | Brown-headed Nuthatch | Marsh Wren |
| Mallard | Forester's Tern | Eastern Bluebird |
| Blue-winged Teal | Royal Tern | American Robin |
| Green-winged Teal | Mourning Dove | Gray Catbird |
| Double-crested Cormorant | Yellow-billed Cuckoo | Northern Mockingbird |
| American White Pelican | Great Horned Owl | European Starling |
| Great Blue Heron | Ruby-throated Hummingbird | Black-and-white Warbler |
| Great Egret | Belted Kingfisher | Common Yellowthroat |
| Snowy Egret | Red-headed Woodpecker | American Redstart |
| Tricolored Egret | Red-bellied Woodpecker | Northern Parula |
| Cattle Egret | Downy Woodpecker | Yellow Warbler |
| Glossy Ibis | Hairy Woodpecker | Palm Warbler |
| Black Vulture | Northern Flicker | Pine Warbler |
| Turkey Vulture | Pileated Woodpecker | Prairie Warbler |
| Osprey | Eastern Wood Pewee | Eastern Towhee |
| Bald Eagle | Eastern Phoebe | Seaside Sparrow |
| Cooper's Hawk | Eastern Kingbird | Song Sparrow |
| Red-shouldered Hawk | Yellow-throated Vireo | Summer Tanager |
| Clapper Rail | Red-eyed Vireo | Northern Cardinal |
| Killdeer | Blue Jay | Blue Grosbeak |
| Spotted Sandpiper | American Crow | Indigo Bunting |
| Greater Yellowlegs | Fish Crow | Bobolink |
| Semipalmated Sandpiper | Barn Swallow | Red-winged Blackbird |
| Laughing Gull | Carolina Chickadee | American Goldfinch |
| Ring-billed Gull | Tufted Titmouse | |

Report of Field Trip to Kiptopeke and the Lower Eastern Shore (10/4/14)

By Stuart Sweetman

Our group met at the south toll plaza of The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel at 7:00 am for one of our monthly field trips. This trip was Kiptopeke State Park and the lower Eastern Shore. We assembled into car pools by 7:30 for our trip to Kiptopeke. The weather started out cloudy with threats of drizzle but by 11:00 the sun was shining with the temperature rising to the upper seventies. We met at the parking lot at Kiptopeke to visit the hawk watching station and to hike around the trails there at the park. Warblers were scarce with only a single Ovenbird seen but raptors were well represented. Highlights at the park were excellent views of Coopers and Sharp-shinned Hawks. A Merlin gave a quick fly by carrying a huge dragonfly for its breakfast. We then headed down to Sunset Beach for a look around. Gulls and Terns were seen off the beach out in the bay. Hawks were passing overhead and a low flyby of a Red Tailed Hawk gave good looks. Next we headed over to The Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge where we got close looks of Peregrine Falcons and a pair of Broad-Winged Hawks were circling low overhead. The swamp overlook gave us Snowy Egret and an immature Yellow-Crowned Night Heron. At Ramp Road we got great looks of White Ibis Seaside Sparrows and a Tricolored Heron was flying low over the marsh. The big surprise was a couple of Common Nighthawks hunting for bugs out over the trees. A trip to Magotha Rd. produced a few Forster's Terns out over the point at the end of the road. A lone Eurasian Collared-Dove was seen in a driveway. The final stop for the day was on the way back home where we stopped at first tunnel island pull off for a pit stop and to check out the rocks for birds. A small flock of Sanderlings flew past and a group of Ruddy Turnstones were found. Swimming along the rocks we were treated by four River Otters that seemed to be way out of place that far from shore. Our group had an enjoyable time and we ended up with 63 species for the day.

People list: Jane Frigo, Jason Strickland, Andy Hawkins, Stuart Sweetman, Katrina and Shawn Dash, Dot Silsby, Ellis and Wendy Maxey, Felicity Rask, John Ericson and Edie Bradburg.

Species list for HRBC field trip to Kiptopeke State Park and the lower Eastern Shore (10/4/14)

Canada Goose	Clapper Rail	Pileated Woodpecker
Mallard	Greater Yellowlegs	Eastern Phoebe
Double-crested Cormorant	Willet	Blue Jay
Great Blue Heron	Ruddy Turnstone	American Crow
Great Egret	Sanderling	Tree Swallow
Snowy Egret	Laughing Gull	Carolina Chickadee
Tricolored Egret	Ring-billed Gull	Tufted Titmouse
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Herring Gull	Carolina Wren
White Ibis	Great Black-backed	Eastern Bluebird
Black Vulture	Caspian Tern	American Robin
Turkey Vulture	Forester's Tern	Gray Catbird
Osprey	Royal Tern	Northern Mockingbird
Bald Eagle	Black Skimmer	Brown Thrasher
Northern Harrier	Rock Pigeon	European Starling
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Black-and-white Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Mourning Dove	Ovenbird
Broad-winged Hawk	Common Nighthawk	Seaside Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Northern Cardinal
American Kestrel	Belted Kingfisher	Brown-headed Cowbird
Merlin	Red-bellied Woodpecker	House Finch
Peregrine Falcon	Northern Flicker	Brown Pelican

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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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