



Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC)

www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org and on Facebook

Vol. 71, No. 4

March/April 2023

Thursday, March 9 Meeting
6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program
Sandy Bottom Nature Park

**Great Dismal Swamp National
Wildlife Refuge: Natural History
and Human History**

By Susan Stanley, Staff Biologist

Hospitality chief Jane Frigo conveys her appreciation to those who have signed up to bring snacks to our meetings at Sandy Bottom.

COVID and HRBC

The Hampton Roads Bird Club membership is encouraged to receive vaccinations and boosters related to COVID. The club suggests everyone use caution to safeguard against potential exposure to COVID by practicing distancing, wearing masks and other established protocols for avoiding pathogen exposure. All members are encouraged to wear masks when inside at meetings and limit unknown persons when carpooling. Most importantly any individuals feeling ill, with a fever, or any typical flu or cold-like symptoms should NOT attend meetings, field trips, or Sunday morning walks. It is up to all members to be mindful of the health of others by staying home when appropriate, and to employ their own precautions.

HRBC Outdoors

NO SUNDAY WALK MARCH 5!

MEET INSTEAD 7:00 AM MARCH 4



Wilson's Snipe at Dutch Gap Conservation Area
this January (by Dianne Snyder)

Thursday, April 13 Meeting
6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program
Sandy Bottom Nature Park

**Machicomoco State Park:
History and Bird Life**

By Emily Harlan, Interpretative Ranger

Regular Bird Walks in Newport News Park
7:00 AM on 1st and 3rd Sundays all 12 months, unless the city schedules a special mass event like One City Marathon on March 5, 2023. Instead **meet 7:00 AM Saturday on March 4, 2023.** Meet at big parking lot behind Ranger Station. Leader: Jane Frigo birderjane@gmail.com home 757-873-0721, cell 757-776-7925

Field Trip to Hog Island WMA

7:00AM Sunday, March 19, 2023

Leader: James Abbott jaa3469@gmail.com

757-320-9191 (text or phone)

Field Trip to Dismal Swamp

Sunday, April 23, 2023

Leader: James Abbott jaa3469@gmail.com

757-320-9191 (text or phone)

HRBC Spring Bird Count

Saturday, May 6, 2023

Leader: Bill Boeh phrogdolph@gmail.com

757-951-7959

Field Trip to James River Pk. Richmond

Sunday, May 7, 2023

Leader: James Abbott jaa3469@gmail.com

757-320-9191 (text or phone)

Field Trip to Hog Island Wildlife Management Area 7:00 AM Sunday March 19, 2023

By James Abbott

Our next field trip will be on Sunday March 19 to Hog Island Wildlife Management Area. We should expect to see a variety of birds; 60-70 total species is not uncommon there. Hog Island is great for waterbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and migrating songbirds. With good water levels shorebirds should be very abundant and White Pelicans can be expected.

I would like to provide everyone with some important information so that we can be prepared on arrival to make the most of our time.

This field trip is limited to 24 participants. All Virginia Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) **require** access permits. I have filed a Special Use Authorization and Group Access Permit for 24. If you have your own access permit, hunting or fishing license, please bring it.

All participants **must have identification** to pass through the gate. They are serious about this. I have seen people arrive to a walk unable to participate.

Most of the time it was because they rode with other people and did not bring their driver's license. We will drive the two-mile access road stopping at various points along the way. We can also walk around the impoundment areas for more viewing. Participants can walk as much as they feel comfortable with.

We will plan to meet at the Dominion Check Station Gate around 7:00 AM. There is a parking area on the right and in front of the guard house. All cars that will be entering the WMA will be subject to an inspection since we will be driving through Dominion's Surry Nuclear Power Plant to access Hog Island. It is best to consolidate the number of vehicles we bring in to help with parking. If you wish to continue into Hog Island and not park at the entrance gate, we will gather at the main lake on the entrance road at 7:30 AM.

You can search Hog Island Wildlife Management Area in Google Maps or use these GPS coordinates to the parking lot:
37.163174, -76.700857

My email is jaa3469@gmail.com and my cell number is 757-320-9191. Email me or leave me a message if you intend to join.

HRBC 2022 Spring Bird Count Saturday May 6, 2023

By Bill Boeh

The HRBC has been conducting the Spring Bird Count (SBC) since 1995. Please join us in being part of this citizen science effort to support bird conservation. It's great fun and a great way to help conserve the birds--and for new members, a great way to be introduced to some of the best birding sites in our region.

The count will be conducted in the same manner as the Christmas Bird Count, within the Newport News circle. The circle is divided into 13 sectors on the lower Peninsula; each sector will have its own team of observers.

The typical count spans most of the day, but some counts only go for a few hours. Don't hesitate to participate because you don't feel you're proficient enough at identifying birds--sector counts are led by our more experienced birders. You can contribute by adding more eyes and ears to help detect the birds

for identification (and counting). You'll be building your identification skills as well. If you can't participate in a field count, feeder-watching is another way you can support this effort. Please let me know if you are interested in participating by email or phone/text at phrogdolph@gmail.com 757-951-7959.

We are invited to this public meeting:

An Update on a Permanent Nesting Site for the Migrating Seabirds in Hampton Roads

7:00 PM Wed., May 17 at Sandy Bottom

Host: York River Group Sierra Club

Speakers include Rebecca Gwynn, Deputy Director, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (more in next HRBC newsletter).

Information: Tyla Matteson,
Chair, tmatteson1@mindspring.com,
(H) 804-275-6476

Reports of Newport News Park Data for "1st and 3rd" Sunday Walks and Winter Count of 01/28/2023

By Bill Boeh (Bird Count Honcho) and Jane Frigo (Sunday Walk Leader)

The results below are also posted at the club website www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org which has the same URL links to the eBird Trip Reports. Each link takes you to the text summary of a HRBC "1st and 3rd" Sunday walk in Newport News Park, the number of individuals seen for each species, and other detail. We'll include such tables in future newsletters.

Date	Crew (us)	Species (them)	URL
Jan 1	9	55	https://ebird.org/tripreport/87128
Jan 15	8	46	https://ebird.org/tripreport/87129
Feb 5	10	53	https://ebird.org/tripreport/103918
Feb 19	15	58	https://ebird.org/tripreport/103920

We offer special thanks to those 15 birders who participated in a special Winter Count over a wider

domain of Newport News Park on Saturday, January 28 (Dave Brown, Melissa Freudenberg, Jane Frigo, Gwen Harris, Walt Harris, Michael Meyer, Jacques van Montfrans, Marc Nichols, Pete Peterman, Cindy Shulz, Stuart Sweetman, C.L. Tanner, Elizabeth Wilkens, Dave Youker, and Bill Boeh). This count recorded both species and individual birds in 5 dedicated sectors: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/100807>



HRBC at False Cape/Back Bay (by Dianne Snyder)

Report of Field Trip to Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) of 02/25/2023

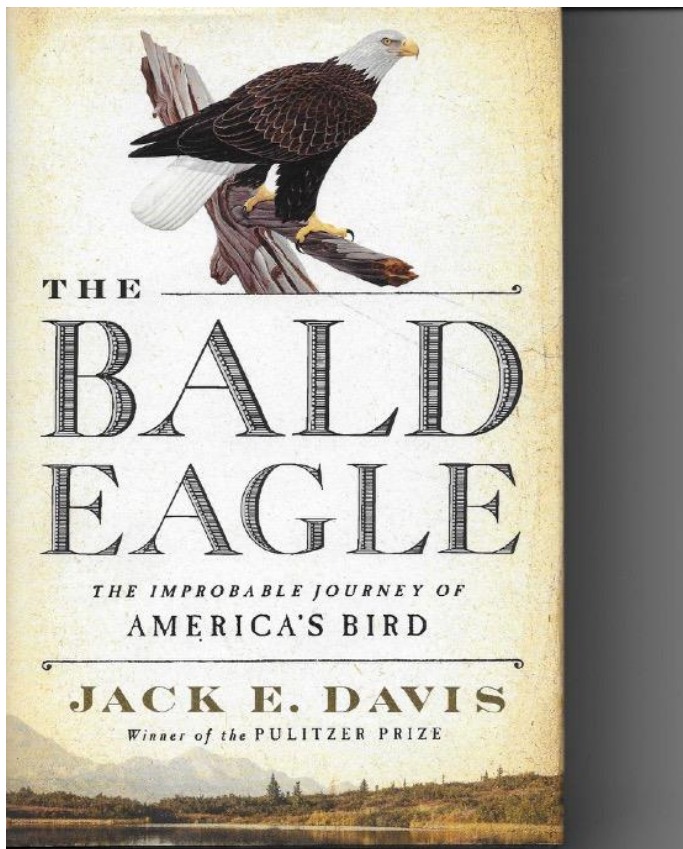
By Bill Boeh

The club's February field trip to Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge took place on February 25. Led by Ryan Walsh, it was very successful with 37 species recorded, and well attended with the tram filled to capacity. The weather forecast was not great (cool temperatures, wind and rain), but the rain and wind held off until mid-morning, beginning as intermittent light rain around 11:00 with winds below 10 mph. Mercifully the bulk of the trip was completed before the wind increased and rain really set in around 12:00. Attendees included Ryan Walsh (leader), John and Marilyn Adair, Ellis and Wendy Maxey, Bill and Anne Boeh, Dave Brown, Dianne Snyder, Todd Trousdell, Samuel and Awilda Chambers, Cindy Schultz, Stuart Sweetman, Sue Tomonaga, Pete and Charm Peterman, Lynn Chandler and Alan Crawford, Corinne Steele, and Jane Frigo. The full list of species and number of individual birds observed can be viewed via the club's eBird Trip Report here: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/103923>.

A Review of Jack E. Davis's "The Bald Eagle, The Improbable Journey of America's Bird"

By Pete Peterman

This is both a depressing and an uplifting book. Depressing because it covers the bleak years when Americans through predator control and then DDT pesticides twice pushed *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* to the brink of extinction, along the same path as the now-extinct Carolina Parakeet and the Passenger Pigeon. But the book is uplifting because it covers people who were determined not to be agents of yet another species extinction. And they succeeded through perseverance of their actions in spite of land-grabbing politicians, wayward ornithologists, rapacious hunters, and the Bald Eagle themselves, who are monogamous creatures, considered among the animal world's finest parents.



In Chapter One, the author exposes two myths. The first is that the Bald Eagle is our national bird. It isn't. It is on the Great Seal of the United States, put there by Congress in 1782, but no President or Congress has ever signed a proclamation or passed a

law to make it our national bird. The second is that Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey displayed on the Great Seal and as a national symbol. It is true Ben did not like the Bald Eagle's penchant of stealing fish from Osprey and felt that the turkey was a model citizen of the avian community. In a letter to his daughter Sarah Bache he wrote mainly about his displeasure with the Society of Cincinnati, founded in 1783, to preserve the ideals, values, and memory of the French and Continental army officers who served in the Revolutionary War. Induction came with a medal, whose centerpiece was the Bald Eagle. In the letter, he stated that the bald was a lazy, thieving breed, while the turkey was full of courage. But Franklin was a lover of a good joke so his commentary could have been not sincere. He never published his views. His grandson, William Temple Franklin, published a collection of Franklin's letters some 27 years after Franklin's death and the myth came to be. Franklin was inducted as an honorary member in the Society of Cincinnati in 1789. And Franklin actually wanted Moses on the Great Seal of the United States, not the turkey.

The book follows the travails of this exclusively North American bird across five centuries, and how its history is entwined with our nation's history. With the Indigenous peoples, there was a peaceful coexistence. The eagle had a spiritual connection and even today, laws and permitting by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, still maintain a considerable degree of oversight in Native religious affairs concerning the taking of eagles and the use of eagle feathers.

One of the surprises was John James Audubon's opinion of the bald eagle which he expressed in *The Birds of America*. In his essay he wrote on each bird that he drew, he called the bald eagle "ferocious" and "overbearing" and it had a "tyrannical temper." He also brought out that they stalk and rob innocent Osprey, stealing the "hard-earned fruits of its labours." He was against having the Bald Eagle as the country's emblem and agreed with the writings of Ben Franklin, that the turkey was more suitable. One of the other surprises was the Alaska Bounty on Bald Eagles, based on false information on what the eagles took from fisheries and fox-fur farming. Even when the bounty on eagles was dropped from the lower 48 states with the passage by Congress of the Bald Eagle Protection Act in 1940, Alaska was given an exemption supported by the National Audubon Society. It wasn't until 1952 that the Act

was amended to include Alaska. That action came 128,273 Alaskan eagles too late.

I recommend this book as it provides the cultural and natural history of the Bald Eagle and that it demonstrates how this bird's miraculous journey may provide inspiration on other environmental challenges.

Photo Contest Winners

By Michael Meyer

December



Brown-headed Nuthatch
Gold by Pete Peterman

Pete: "Brown Headed Nuthatch was photographed in the Newport News Park Arboretum on Nov 20. I used a Nikon D500 with a NIKOR 200-500 mm lens at 1/1000 sec at f5.6 and an ISO of 2800. The nuthatch had responded to a playback."



Western Tanager
Silver by Laura Mae

Laura: "Western Tanager 12/09/22. After enjoying sunrise at Mackay Island, I received a text from Loretta Silvia about a Western Tanager in Loretta's Virginia Beach yard. I drove up. Loretta told me where to stand and look and... within minutes the Western Tanager flew in - twice! See <https://ebird.org/checklist/S123705171> for more photos of this Western Tanager, the Baltimore Orioles it associated with and a pair of Hummingbirds that over-wintered there. This photo was taken with a Nikon Coolpix P900."

January



Great Egret
Gold by Bryan Barmore

Bryan on the Great Egret: "Sharon and I went to Chincoteague this year on to celebrate Thanksgiving. We had a great day of birding and photography with rather warm weather. As we were leaving there were several yellowlegs feeding on the side of the road. Dusk was quickly settling and out in the pond this egret came in for a final snack for the night."

February



Harlequin Ducks
Silver by Pete Peterman

Pete: “The Harlequin Ducks were photographed on Dec 28 at Barnegat Lighthouse State Park, NJ using the D500 with a NIKOR 200-500 mm lens at 1/1000 sec at f 5.6 and an ISO of 360. I had to climb the stone levee to get the shot as they had congregated just on the other side.”



American Kestrel
Gold by Bryan Barmore

Bryan: “When we got out of the car at Phoebus Waterfront Park for the Christmas Bird Count, this kestrel was hunting over the old parking lot. It then landed on a telephone pole giving fabulous views. Things only improved when it took off hunting again, this time in even better light and closer. We must have spent at least 5 minutes watching this one bird and ignoring everything going on in the water.”



Black-crowned Night Heron
Bronze by Lynn Chandler

Lynn: “The Black Crown Night Heron was across Salter's Creek on one of his usual pilings at 8 o'clock in the morning in very late October. As always I am shooting with my Nikon 40x optical zoom wide full HD.”



Northern Mockingbird
Silver by Lynn Chandler

Lynn: “The Mockingbird was setting in my side yard on my yard statue at 11 o'clock in the morning in late November. I took a tons of pictures but loved the one of him ‘stretching’.”



Canvasback
Bronze by Pete Peterman

Pete: “The Canvasback was photographed on Feb 4 at Pea Island NWR, NC. This was part of the annual VSO trip to OBX for winter ducks. I used the D500 with the NIKOR 200-500 mm lens at f 5.6 and an ISO of 160. It was a very cold and windy day.”

Rules for the HRBC photo contest remain as

1. Each member may submit up to 2 photos taken in the last 60 days each month.
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) by the 10th 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.

2022 Christmas Bird Count Results

By Bill Boeh

This is a capsule summary of the HRBC participation (12/17/2022) in the broader Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). It was presented fully to the February meeting and will eventually appear on www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org. The count was fun, a demonstration of dedication, and source of objective data for scientific investigations. Total species observed was 125; total birds observed was 19,345.

Display of count data is much facilitated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s eBird application feature called “Trip Reports” which collates the data from all checklists submitted over a specified period. The Trip Report for the 2022 Newport News Circle CBC is here: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/83757>. You don’t need to have an eBird account to view the report—just click on the link! There you’ll find the list of species and number of individuals seen; also, you can “drill down” to see the specific checklists on which each bird was reported, which can include a map of the observer’s route, the observer’s comments, and any photos posted.

Check out the Audubon Christmas Bird Count Trends Viewer at <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/where-have-all-birds-gone> Users can input a target species, target area (down to the state level), and target time period (year range). The tool will yield the annual per cent change in the species population in the target area over the target time period.

Christmas Bird Count Participants. Let me express my gratitude to all who participated—without them, there is no count! Also, a special thanks to those who filled in as sector leaders when the usual leader was not available: Tracy Tate, Cindy Schulz, and Stuart Sweetman.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me at phrogdolph@gmail.com.

Airport Walt Harris Gwen Harris C. L. Tanner	Langley William Boeh Mark Sopko Cecilia Boyd Lane Tong*
Chesapeake Ellis Maxey Wendy Maxey	Mariner’s Museum Angela Herring Peggy Waterfield Laura Mae
Ft. Monroe Bryan Barmore Sharon Burton Sandy Graham*	Mercury North Tracy Tate Melody Avery
Grandview Nick Flanders Pete Peterman Oleski Dubovyk* Chi Wei*	Newport News Cindy Schulz Susan Crockett Tom Crockett
Hampton Dave Brown Heidi Young	Poquoson Betsy Garrett April Solitro Marjorie Schenck Gee Brownley
Harpersville Jane Frigo Christy Gardner* Susie Engle* Marc Nichols Sue Tominaga*	Tabb Stuart Sweetman Cory Davis
Harwoods Mill Meredith Bell Lee Bell John Adair Marilyn Adair	Feeder Watch Tom Charlock

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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.
- 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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*Editor (T. Charlock)
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