



# *Bird Notes*

Newsletter of the

## *Hampton Roads Bird Club*

Vol. 56, No. 3

January / February 2008

### **January 10th Meeting—7:00 PM "Birds of Prey in Hampton Roads"**

We are happy to have Mr. Reese Lukei join us on January 10. His presentation will focus on birds of prey in our area. Mr. Lukei operated a raptor banding station for 18 years at Eastern Shore of Va. National Wildlife Refuge (ESVNWR). Volunteering at Back Bay NWR, he led the effort to increase the Osprey population and monitor Bald Eagle activity. He is a volunteer research associate for the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of W&M and has received several awards for his outstanding work, including 2005 Conservationist of the Year in Virginia Beach.

**Host/Hostesses: Vicki Cooper, Nancy Gruttman-Tyler, Dave Youker**

### **February 14th Meeting—7:00 PM "June 2007 Birding Trip to Borneo"**

Peggy Spiegel Opengari will speak to our club on February 14 about her birding trip to Borneo this past June. Peggy has traveled all over the world. She has retired from the birding store business so she is happy to travel and add countless birds to her already-long list of lifebirds. She lives in Pearisburg, Va. with her husband Bill, and is very active in Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO), leading field trips and presenting programs on hummingbirds, Costa Rica, Antarctica, Madagascar, and South Africa. Peggy's exciting trip to Borneo, the beautiful bird photos, and stories of other "jungle creatures" she encountered will help to enlarge our world of birds, making us wish we were world travelers. Please come out and enjoy the evening!

**Hostess: Meredith Bell**

### **January Field Trips**

**JAN. 6 & 20 (Sunday) ~ 7:00-9:00 AM**  
**Regular bird walk in Newport News Park**  
Meet at Ranger Station parking lot.  
Trip Leader: Jane Frigo, 873-0721

**JAN. 12 (Sat.), 7:45 AM – CBBT Islands**  
Those who have signed up for this field trip will meet at the south toll plaza of the CBBT at 7:45 AM to line up carpools. Bring a picture ID. We will divide into two groups of 15, with a designated leader for each. We'll spend one hour on each of the secured islands (2, 3, 4). You can continue on to the Eastern Shore or return home when we're done. Make final plans at the January meeting. Fees covering escort expenses have been collected. The bridge toll still applies (\$12 for the island only, \$17 for a one-day round trip). Dress warmly and bring snacks/lunch. Contact is Jane Frigo (873-0721).

### **February Field Trips**

**FEB. 3 & 17 (Sunday) ~ 7:00-9:00 AM**  
**Regular bird walk in Newport News Park**  
Meet at Ranger Station parking lot.  
Trip Leader: Jane Frigo, 873-0721

### **FEB. 23 (Sat.), 8:00 AM – Greensprings Trail**

For our February 23 field trip we'll explore Greensprings Nature Trail behind Jamestown High School in Williamsburg. This trail encircles a beaver pond and has an extensive boardwalk and observation deck overlooking the water. Redheaded Woodpeckers can be seen along with waterfowl. Meet at 8:00 AM by the tennis courts behind the high school. Take I-64 West to exit 242 (Rt. 199 West) to Williamsburg. Turn left on to Rt. 5, and turn left at the light to the high school. This will be a walking trip, lasting until noon. Sign up at the February meeting, or call trip leader Jane Frigo (873-0721) to let her know you're coming.

## The President's Perch

*Meredith Bell*

Many members attended our Christmas party in December. Many thanks to Hilary Propst, Gail Claydon and Jane Frigo for organizing and setting up for the event, and to Tom Claydon for arranging the wonderful slide show. Everyone enjoyed the delicious food and the chance to visit with each other.

Do you have a list of New Year's resolutions? If so, I hope it includes time for relaxation and fun with our Club! We've got wonderful speakers and field trips planned for 2008, and we'd love to have you join us.

There are lots of great local birding hot spots that you can explore on your own, too. Recently my husband Lee and I explored the Colonial Parkway, starting at the Yorktown Visitor's Center. In that parking lot we saw more than 50 Cedar Waxwings in a single tree near the building. On the York River more than 1500 Ruddy Ducks were visible, and we encountered 5 Bald Eagles along the road. Jamestown Island held treasures like Red-headed Woodpecker, both Kinglets, and a Hermit Thrush.

And don't forget the Great Backyard Bird Count (described in more detail below), which you can do in your own back yard!

---

### Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

The GBBC is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, GBBC gives everyone a chance to discover the birds in their neighborhood.

You simply count the highest number of each species you see during an outing or a sitting, then enter your tally at the GBBC website:

[www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc)

This year's count is February 15-18. Mark your calendar, and plan to participate! You can get more details on their website or the HRBC website: [www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org](http://www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org)

## Field Trip Reports

### Mathews County – 11/10/07

Despite the rainy conditions the first hour of the trip, we had 17 enthusiastic birders and recorded 59 species on our November field trip to Mathews County.

We started at Bethel Beach at high tide and heard Clapper Rails but never saw them. We got quite a show from several Forster Terns hovering over the marsh grasses, with a Northern Harrier in the same area. On the beach were Dunlin, Black-bellied Plover and Sanderling, with Surf Scoters, one Black Scoter and one Common Tern. Red-throated Loons and a Bald Eagle flew overhead.

Next we drove to Route 603, leading to the Mobjack Bay. Birds of note along the road included several Song, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Killdeer, Pine Warbler and Red-tailed Hawk. One of the highlights in checking out the water was a group of 28 Common Loons! We also found Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Northern Gannet, Royal Tern and Brown Pelicans.

At New Point Comfort we had a Common Tern and an amazing number of Tree Swallows, as least 2,000 in this location and several hundred in the other areas. At New Point Wharf on Route 602 we saw more Northern Gannets and Brown Pelicans. A great day!

### Newport News Park Walks – 2007 Summary

Many thanks to **Jane Frigo** for her faithful attendance and leadership at the Sunday walks in Newport News Park. Blanks indicate record not available for that item. Join us when you can – see page 1 for dates!

Month	1st Sunday		3rd Sunday	
	# People	# Species	# People	# Species
JAN	13	46	3	39
FEB	6	39	9	36
MAR		44		34
APR	9	46		
MAY	8	47	5	59
JUN	rain	--	13	43
JUL	10	47	5	
AUG	8	47	7	38
SEP	12	41	10	45
OCT	12	31	9	47
NOV	17	52	11	47
DEC	6	50	5	44
<b>Average</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>43</b>

## 2007 Report on the Hampton Roads Bird Club Bluebird Trail

*Our Club is fortunate to have four individuals who dedicate countless hours each year to maintaining local Bluebirds trails: **Harry Carlson, Dot Silsby, Jim Hill, and Nan LaRue.** Dot and Harry submitted the following report for this season's activities.*

The HRBC Bluebird Trail located on the Deer Run and Cardinal golf courses at the Newport News City Park has now been in use for 35 years. The trail is maintained by **Harry Carlson** and **Dot Silsby**. This year they began checking on nest building, egg laying, and hatching March 28th and continued until August 13.

The 100 Bluebird nesting boxes were kept busy with Bluebirds producing 398 fledglings. One course had 201 fledged Bluebirds and the other had 197. Other species using the boxes were Carolina Chickadees (16 fledglings), House Wrens (15 fledglings), Carolinas Wrens (8 fledglings), and Tree Swallows (5 fledglings, a first for this trail).

We did not lose any Bluebirds to raccoons or snakes this year. The guards Harry designed and built have proven to be effective. We had some trouble with wasps during the summer and mud daubers in the fall. These annoying creatures kept a few boxes out of production for a short time, but did no long term damage.

During this season, Dr. Dan Cristol and his student Ryan Burdge from William & Mary, conducted research on the development of Bluebird young raised on golf courses to see if chemicals used on golf courses had a detrimental effect. They took blood samples and made accurate measurements of their size to compare with birds raised at other locations. The pesticide results are not known yet, but the nestlings appear to be similar in health to nestlings from off of golf courses. The Newport News courses may be more environmentally friendly than most courses. The golf course manager, Charlie Wheaton, tells us that he makes an effort to minimize the use of chemicals harmful to wildlife. Charlie also is very supportive of the Bluebird trail, allowing us to use golf carts for our surveys.

## Bluebird Trail Report (cont'd.)

Kathy Van Mullekom (reporter) and Joe Fudge (photographer) with the Daily Press accompanied Dot and Harry on one of their record-keeping expeditions. An article on their investigation appeared in the June 10<sup>th</sup> 2007 issue of the paper.



In the fall, Harry and Dot took down all of the boxes and many of the predator guards as well for repair and painting. The boxes and guards are now back in place ready for another season. Harry also built ten boxes that open on the side for the purpose of taking side view (instead of top view) photographs of the young birds at various stages of development.

**Nan LaRue** and **Jim Hill** monitored the other Newport News Park Bluebird Trail, located in the Park Arboretum. This trail usually has 45 nesting boxes, but the total was reduced by 6 - 3 were stolen and 3 were torn down by unknown pranksters. From the remaining 39, 84 Bluebirds were fledged. There were also 16 Carolina Chickadees, 14 Carolina Wrens, and 13 House Wrens.

It was a great season, with new adventures every week: a young Red-Tailed Hawk sat still long enough to have his picture taken; a Black Snake was seen; Crawfish slowly made their way across the fairway; Hawks were spotted on their first flight; and Scarlet Tanagers often appeared.

Best of all, our own **Nan LaRue** was honored by the Virginia Bluebird Society for all of her good work: maintaining a Bluebird Trail; giving programs; serving as Treasurer of the HRBC; and keeping records of fledged Bluebirds from our area for the Virginia Bluebird Society.

***Congratulations, Nan!***

President	Meredith Bell	merandlee@cox.net	(804) 642-2197
Vice President	Mary Copeland	benmarycop@cavtel.net	(757) 851-7007
Secretary	Gail Claydon	gclaydon@cox.net	(757) 930-1038
Treasurer	Nan LaRue	<a href="mailto:nan.larue@cox.net">nan.larue@cox.net</a>	(757) 877-9415
Board: (7/05-6/08)	Jane Frigo	birderjane@gmail.com	(757) 873-0721
Board: (7/06-6/09)	Ben Copeland	benmarycop@cavtel.net	(757) 851-7007
Board: (7/07-6/10)	Tom Claydon	tclaydon@cox.net	(757) 930-1038
Field Trip Coordinator	Jane Frigo	birderjane@gmail.com	(757) 873-0721
Newsletter Editors	Alison/Meredith Bell	merandlee@cox.net	(804) 642-2197

---

To join the Hampton Roads Bird Club, please fill out the form below and bring it along with your check to the next meeting or mail to: **HRBC Treasurer – 19 Hertzler Road, Newport News, VA 23602-6125.**

Membership is from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</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 Unlimited in the Village Shops at 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 7:00 PM.

-----

### Hampton Roads Bird Club – Membership Form

Renewal\_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday (month-day): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Editor*  
*Hampton Roads Bird Club*  
*8270 Little England Road*  
*Hayes, VA 23072*

