



# Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

**Hampton Roads Bird Club**

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

---

Vol. 57, No. 4

March / April 2009

---

## **March 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting—7:00 PM "Birding the Southwest US in April"**

**Randy Thrasher** is a VSO member from Lynchburg, VA, and is known for his beautiful bird carvings. Since retiring from teaching art, Randy travels and photographs birds all over the world with his wife Sue. We are happy to have Randy as a first-time speaker. He will show us western birds from places such as Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, and San Diego, with good looks at the California Condor and the surrounding area's cultural uniqueness. Please come out to see a great program and to welcome Randy and Sue!

**Host/Hostess:** Gail Claydon, Hilary Propst

---

### **March Field Trips**

**MAR. 1 & 15, 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

**MAR. 21 (Sat.), 8:00 AM – Hog Island**  
Note this is the **THIRD Sat.** of March. Meet in the parking lot of Surry Nuclear Power Plant at **8 AM** and carpool into Hog Island. **BRING A PICTURE ID.** All cars will be subject to a search; no drugs, alcohol or guns are permitted. Bring drinks and snacks if needed. From Newport News: take the James River Bridge south. Right on Rt. 258/32 to Benn's Church. Right on Rt. 10 to Poolesville. Right on Rt. 650 (Hog Island Rd) to Power Plant. From Williamsburg: take the Scotland Ferry. Travel Rt. 31 (Rolfe Hwy). Left on Rt. 10 to Poolesville. Left on Rt. 650 (Hog Island Rd) to the power plant. Sign up at the March meeting or call trip leader Jane Frigo at 873-0721 if attending.

## **April 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting—7:00 PM "Chasing Birds Across Texas"**

**Mark Adams** is a professional astronomer who works for the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) in Charlottesville, Virginia, where he is the Assistant Director for Education & Public Outreach. Mark came to Virginia five years ago from U. of TX - McDonald Observatory. He is an avid bird and butterfly watcher and a professional astronomer. Mark will bring copies of his book, *Chasing Birds across Texas: A Birding Big Year* and offer them at a special discounted price at the meeting: \$15 for paper, \$25 for hardcover.

**Host/Hostess:** Cary Koronas, Tess Matteson

---

### **April Field Trips**

**APR. 5 & 19, 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

**APR. 18 (Sat.), 7:00 AM – Great Dismal Swamp**  
Note this is the **THIRD Sat.** of April. We will bird Railroad Ditch at the Great Dismal Swamp. Meet at the Railroad Ditch gate at **7:00 AM**. Carpooling is essential since the number of cars allowed is limited. Bring drinks and snacks if needed. Directions: Take the James River Bridge Rt. 17 South, and turn right on Bennett's Pasture Road (627). When it ends, turn right on Nansemond Parkway (337), then left on White Marsh Rd (642). Turn left on Desert Road, (604). Pass the Refuge headquarters. Entrance to the Railroad Ditch is on the left. Trip leader will be Nick Flanders. Sign up at the April meeting or call Jane Frigo at 873-0721 if attending.

## The President's Perch

### News from the Editor

For those of you who weren't at the February meeting, Julie Breeden resigned as Club president this month after accepting a full-time position with a veterinary practice in Stafford County.

Per our Bylaws, the vice president assumes the duties for the remainder of the term (end of June). Our current VP Mary Copeland has graciously agreed to step in and fill this role. Thank you, Mary!

We want to recognize Julie's substantial contributions during her short term as president. She organized the various exhibits HRBC participated in this fall and was present for all hours of each exhibit. We will miss Julie's positive energy, creativity, and strong leadership, and we wish her well in her new career!

### Nominating Committee

Thanks to Cary Koronas, Marc Nichols, and Hilary Propst for agreeing to serve on the Nominating Committee. During March they'll prepare a slate of officers for 2009-10 to present at the April meeting. If you're interested in serving as an officer or Board member, please contact Cary Koronas at 851-6209 or [vabirds@aol.com](mailto:vabirds@aol.com).

### Get Ready for Spring

Be sure to visit our two local stores for tips and supplies to get your yard and bird boxes ready for the new arrivals:

- Wild Wings Nature Store in Hidenwood Shopping Center
- Wild Birds Unlimited in Kiln Creek Shopping Center

---

### Future Events

Mark your calendar now and plan to join us:

**May 16** (Sat) – Joint field trip with Richmond Audubon Society to James River Park in Richmond, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Parking Lot (7:00 AM)

**June 6** (Sat) – Annual Picnic at Sandy Bottom, 8:00-11:00 AM walk, 11:30-1:30 Picnic

## Spring Bird Count

Plan to participate in our annual Spring Bird Count on April 25<sup>th</sup>. This count covers the same territory as the winter Audubon Christmas Count but is not an Audubon event. Compiler Clark White will assign sectors and tally results. He'll distribute the sector folders to the team leaders at the April meeting.

These counts are always fun and have the added excitement of the migrating birds to challenge us. We welcome experienced and new birders alike, as this is a great chance to see and learn about new species!

To participate, contact Clark at 875-7649 or [cwbirds@cox.net](mailto:cwbirds@cox.net), or sign up at the March or April meeting.

---

### HRBC in the Community

Members have been active in the community. On January 7, Gregory Milslagle gave a program to the Newport News Master Gardeners. His talk was titled "Winter Care for Backyard Birds" and was very well received!

On January 16, Jane Frigo spoke to the Newport News Horticultural Society. The program was titled "Backyard Birds throughout the Seasons." Jane received a \$50 honorarium, which she donated to the HRBC education fund. Thanks, Jane!

Julie Breeden put together the PowerPoint® presentation that Jane used, and it can be used again in the future. Anyone interested in giving a program to the public should speak to a Board member.

---

### Upcoming HRBC Exhibits

**March 14** (Sat) – Horticultural Extravaganza, 8:15 AM-3:00 PM, York High School.

**April 11** (Sat) – Bluebird Gap Farm Children's Spring Festival, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

**We need volunteers** from the Club to help us cover these times. Contact Jane Frigo (873-0721) if you can assist. It's a great way to meet new people and introduce them to birding.

## Field Trip Reports

*Jane Frigo and Nick Flanders*

**JAN. 10.** The new year got off to a great start with a field trip to the **Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel** and the **Eastern Shore** that resulted in a total of 78 species. Highlights from the islands included thousands of Surf Scoters, hundreds of Long-tailed Ducks, Common Eider and King Eider. Other target birds such as Great Cormorant, Purple Sandpiper, Lesser Black-Backed Gull, Black and White-winged Scoter, and Greater Scaup were present in small numbers.

At Eastern Shore of VA NWR we watched over a thousand Snow Geese fly over, and we saw Northern Shovelers, Black Ducks, and Gadwall in the pond on Ramp Road. A visit to Oyster yielded a flyover flock of 30 Pipits at the landfill, and the GLAUCOUS GULL was easily found on the "Billy Crystal" as previously reported. At the end of Magotha Road we saw over a thousand Brant and 7 AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS soaring with Turkey Vultures above the buildings just to the north.

**FEB. 14.** The Club visited **Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve** and **Craney Island** in Portsmouth for our February field trip. A nice variety of wintering birds was found at both locations. Hoffler Creek was very productive with a Snowy Egret and a group of at least 6 female Common Mergansers as the highlights. It was fun to watch a group of cooperative Green-winged Teal feeding along the edges of the marsh. Two Brown Creepers were spotted in the woods and multiple Pine Warblers were singing.

At Craney Island, an Osprey was perched on a platform on the Elizabeth River. Another unexpected bird was a Spotted Sandpiper foraging along the beach. Shorebirds included Dunlin, Western Sandpiper, Sanderling and a single Short-billed Dowitcher. Waterfowl included Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Horned Grebe and Red-throated Loon. Raptors did not disappoint, with a pair of Red-tailed Hawks, multiple Northern Harriers and an American Kestrel.

## Virginia Spring Events

### VSO Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting of the Virginia Society of Ornithology will be held **May 1-3** in Fredericksburg and is hosted jointly by the Fredericksburg Birding Club and the Univ. of Mary Washington. This event does have a registration fee.

Details on the VSO website:  
<http://www.virginiabirds.net/>

---

### Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival

Another opportunity for great local birding will be the birding festival at the Great Dismal Swamp on **May 7-9**. This family-friendly event is free and open to the public. Activities include guided bird walks, narrated bus tours, bird banding demos and more. For a brochure, contact headquarters at: 757-986-3705 or [greatdismalswamp@fws.gov](mailto:greatdismalswamp@fws.gov).

---

### VSO Outer Banks Field Trip Report *Meredith Bell*

HRBC was well represented at the FEB. 20-22 VSO field to the Outer Banks: Lee and Meredith Bell, Richard and Barbara Hudgins, Vel McCarty, Clark and Marilyn White, and Hayes and Joyce Williams.

Highlights were great looks at a Tri-Colored Heron, FIVE Black-crowned Night Herons, an Ipswich Savannah Sparrow, and a Clapper Rail that stayed out in the open for a while. Large numbers of Northern Shoveler, Green-Winged Teal and Northern Pintail were seen in various locations.

On the ocean, we were treated both mornings to 100s (if not 1,000s) of Northern Gannets flying south in a continuous stream. Also on the beach were many Red-Throated Loons and gulls, including Lesser Black-backed.

My husband Lee and I saw a very memorable and rare spectacle through our scope at Alligator River NWR on Sunday morning. FOUR Bald Eagles (2 adult, 2 first-year – a "family," we assumed) were on the ground together in one spot. What a great way to end the week-end!

President	Mary Copeland	<a href="mailto:benmarycop@cavtel.net">benmarycop@cavtel.net</a>	(757) 851-7007
Vice President	Mary Copeland	<a href="mailto:benmarycop@cavtel.net">benmarycop@cavtel.net</a>	(757) 851-7007
Secretary	Gail Claydon	<a href="mailto:gclaydon@cox.net">gclaydon@cox.net</a>	(757) 930-1038
Treasurer	Nan LaRue	<a href="mailto:nan.larue@cox.net">nan.larue@cox.net</a>	(757) 877-9415
Board: (7/06-6/09)	Ben Copeland	<a href="mailto:benmarycop@cavtel.net">benmarycop@cavtel.net</a>	(757) 851-7007
Board: (7/07-6/10)	Tom Claydon	<a href="mailto:tclaydon@cox.net">tclaydon@cox.net</a>	(757) 930-1038
Board: (7/08-6/11)	Mike Propst	<a href="mailto:M9538@cox.net">M9538@cox.net</a>	(757) 886-1150
Field Trip Coordinators	Jane Frigo	<a href="mailto:birderjane@gmail.com">birderjane@gmail.com</a>	(757) 873-0721
	Nick Flanders	<a href="mailto:flicknanders@hotmail.com">flicknanders@hotmail.com</a>	(757) 599-5415
Newsletter/Web Editor	Meredith Bell	<a href="mailto:merandlee@cox.net">merandlee@cox.net</a>	(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 Kiln Creek Shopping Center.

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box to receive newsletter via email/website instead of hard copy by mail.

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

