



Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

Hampton Roads Bird Club

www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org

Vol. 58, No. 2

November / December 2009

November 12th Meeting–7:00 PM "Adventures in Alaska"

We're excited to have **Jethro Runco** as our guest speaker for the November meeting! Jethro is a licensed bird bander and was the head bander at the Kiptopeke State Park songbird banding station during fall migration for eight years. Jethro has been working in Alaska catching and tagging Whimbrels, surveying birds, and running a small banding station. Join us as Jethro informs and entertains us with details about his latest adventure!

Host/Hostess: Jane Frigo, Walter Livant

November Field Trips

NOV. 1 & 15, Sunday ~ 7:00 AM
Regular bird walk in Newport News Park
Meet at Ranger Station parking lot.
Trip Leader: Jane Frigo, 873-0721

NOV. 14 (Sat.), 7:00 AM – Eastern Shore
We'll assemble in the parking lot of the south toll plaza of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel at 7:00 AM, where members will car pool over to the Eastern Shore. The bridge toll is \$12 one way and \$5 if the return trip is within 24 hrs. Normal state park entrance fees and passes apply. The first stop will be Kiptopeke State Park, where we'll visit the bird banding station and hawk watch station. From there we'll caravan to explore other areas, including Magotha Rd, Seaside Dr, the landfill and Oyster. This is an all-day trip, so bring snacks and lunch. Highlights should be the continuing songbird migration and the beginning of the waterfowl movement. Sign up at the Nov. meeting or contact field trip coordinator Dave Youker (224-1188) to let him know you're coming.

December 10th, Meeting–6:00 PM "Holiday Dinner and Slide Show"

Join us at the early start time of **6:00 PM** at Sandy Bottom for the Club's annual Holiday party. This year we'll have a potluck dinner, with meats and beverages provided by the Club. **Bring your favorite appetizer, side dish or dessert to share.** Contact Dot Silsby (534-7963) if you'd like to help with preparations for the event. During the meal, we'll have a slide show of pictures taken by our club's talented photographers at field trips and other events. Contact Tom Claydon (930-1038) if you have photos you'd like to include. Individual members will have an opportunity to show their slides afterwards.

December Field Trips

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

DEC. 19 (Sat.), 7:00 AM – Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count
Our field trip for December is the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. We're always looking for volunteers to help with the count. Whether you're experienced or a new birder, your eyes and ears are needed for this event!

The area is divided into 13 sectors, with an experienced leader for each. Most sectors count from 7:00 AM to 4:30 PM. There's a \$5 fee for each participant, and you'll receive a copy of the full report published by the National Audubon Society. Sign up at NOV. or DEC. meetings, or contact our coordinator/compiler, **Clark White** (875-7649 or cwbirds@cox.net). Check out details on page 2.

The President's Perch

Mary Copeland

Happy Holidays and Happy Bird Counts!

HRBC Club members **Jane Frigo** and **Shirley Devan** presented a program on "Backyard Birds" to about a dozen residents of Colonial Harbor Retirement Community in Yorktown on October 13.



This photo was taken on their walk around the facility after the presentation. The presentation included demonstrations of bird calls and sounds as well as information on what birds need to thrive in the backyard. Shirley presented the residents with a copy of the new book "National Geographic – Birding Essentials" for their library.

Center for Conservation Biology

The mission of this important local organization is to “ensure the viability of bird populations within the mid-Atlantic region.” Get its latest e-newsletter, Conservation Cornerstone:

<http://www.ccb-wm.org/news/index.htm>

January CBBT Field Trip

We plan to visit the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel for our JAN. 16 field trip. You'll need to register in advance, completing a form and paying a \$10 fee to cover the cost of the guard that must accompany us. Dave Youker will provide forms at the NOV. and DEC. meetings and will need your money by the DEC. 10 meeting.

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The first “Christmas Bird Census” was held on December 25, 1900. Our Club started doing the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in 1952, with the 15-mile diameter of the “Newport News” area (Newport News, Hampton, Poquoson and part of York Co.) divided into 13 sectors.

The count in each of the sectors is led by an experienced birder who is familiar with the area. There is a “tally” at the end of the day where the data collected is assembled. We need volunteers for this year’s count on **Saturday, DEC. 19**. The more eyes and ears we have, the better! Your participation is valuable in helping us get an accurate count for this important annual event.

Audubon requires a \$5.00 fee for all participants except those 18 and younger. This helps cover the cost of recording and publishing the data. You'll receive a copy of the full report, published by the National Audubon Society.

Clark White is the coordinator/compiler for the Newport News Count. Contact him (875-7649 or cwbirds@cox.net), or sign up at the NOV. or DEC. meeting. The day usually runs from 7am-4:30pm. Sector leaders, we'll meet at Dot Silsby's home at 5pm for the tally (241 James River Drive, Newport News, phone: 534-7963). Please bring a snack to share since we'll be hungry after the long day!

VSO Va. Beach Field Trip

The Cape Henry Audubon Society, with support from HRBC and other clubs, will host the annual VSO field trip to Virginia Beach, DEC. 4-6.

The event kicks off with a field trip Fri. afternoon to the Whitehurst Tract. Featured trips include a visit to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel islands on Sat. and Back Bay NWR/False Cape State Park on Sun.

It is important to register for the field trips as participation is limited. Contact the coordinator, Clark White (875-7649 or cwbirds@cox.net), to provide your information.

Check the VSO website for complete details at www.virginiabirds.net.

Field Trip Reports

Greensprings Trail – 9/12/09

Ten members of the club gathered at the Greensprings Trail for the first field trip of the season. We had to share the trail with an Ironman competition that morning, but we were still able to see 44 species. Highlights included sighting of Pileated and Red-headed woodpeckers. At the trail head, more than a dozen Killdeer were observed around the school track. Club members were joined by a couple from Reno, NV, and we were able to point out a number of life-birds for them. A great start to the birding year!

Beaverdam Park – 10/10/09

The rain held off, and the birds were active during the early morning. The 12 members that traveled to Gloucester tallied 48 species. The area around the parking lot was particularly active with numerous sightings of Eastern Bluebirds, Eastern Phoebe, Pine Warblers and Chipping Sparrows. We also got a close-up look at an adult Bald Eagle flying low at the edge of the reservoir.

Waterfowl included Pied-billed Grebe, Ruddy Duck, Mallards and Mute Swans. On the trail, we had good looks for comparative purposes at both Gray-cheeked and Swainson's thrushes.

Thanksgiving Window Watch Count

The Thanksgiving Window Watch Count will take place on November 26, 2008. Anyone can participate by watching for just one hour at any time on Thanksgiving Day.

To participate, select a circular area 15 feet in diameter, preferably one which includes feeders, bird baths or habitat which attracts birds. Count the number of birds of each species that come into this area during the hour. Mail your results to: Thelma Dalmas, 1230 Viewmont Drive, Evington, VA 24550.

For details, see page 7 of the VSO Fall 2009 Newsletter (PDF file) at:

www.virginiabirds.net.

NEW! Patches for Sale



We've got beautiful patches for sale with the Club's new logo, and they're just \$5! You can put them on caps, vests, jackets, or canvas bags. Buy yours at the next meeting, or contact Richard Hudgins, Treasurer.

2009 Bluebird Trail Report By Dot Silsby and Harry Carlson

The HRBC Bluebird Trail on the Deer Run and Cardinal Golf Courses in the Newport News City Park has been in use for 37 years. The trail is maintained by Dot Silsby and Harry Carlson. The necessary repairs to damaged boxes and guards were made in the Fall of 2008, and checking on nest building, egg laying, and hatching began on April 8th. This work continued until August 18th.

The 100 nesting boxes produced 337 Bluebird fledglings. The Championship course produced 197 Bluebird fledglings, 6 Carolina Chickadees, and 4 Tree Swallows. The first Tree Swallow attempt produced 6 eggs, with the 6 young birds mysteriously disappearing shortly after hatching. A later attempt was more successful. The Cardinal course produced 140 Bluebird fledglings and 14 Carolina Chickadees.

The guards Harry designed and built for all the boxes kept the Raccoons and snakes out. Another problem caused by House Wrens reoccurred this year. The male Wrens kept filling boxes with sticks and the females built nests and laid eggs, which we removed each week. They also pecked Bluebird eggs and perhaps removed young Bluebirds from a few other boxes. In at least two cases, Bluebird babies were found to be missing shortly after hatching and before they could have flown. This did not appear to be the result of Raccoon predators, since the nests were undisturbed. Even with these problems, it was still a wonderful and exciting year. Just being outdoors, watching the Bluebirds and other wild life is a great pleasure.

President	Mary Copeland	benmarycop@cavtel.net	(757) 851-7007
Vice President	Marc Nichols	SBNPRANGERS@hampton.gov	(757) 810-0231
Secretary	Libby Carmines	Carmy5@aol.com	(757) 591-9174
Treasurer	Richard Hudgins		(757) 596-9603
Board: (7/07-6/10)	Tom Claydon	tclaydon@cox.net	(757) 930-1038
Board: (7/08-6/11)	Mike Propst	M9538@cox.net	(757) 886-1150
Board: (7/09-6/12)	John Dawson		(757) 874-2408
Field Trip Coordinator	Dave Youker	youkerd@aol.com	(757) 224-1188
Newsletter/Web Editor	Meredith Bell	merandlee@cox.net	(804) 642-2197

To join, please fill out the form below and bring it along with your check (made payable to “Hampton Roads Bird Club,”) to the next meeting or mail to: **Richard Hudgins, 803 Riverside Drive, Newport News, VA 23606-3629.**

Membership is from July 1st to June 30th. **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

