



# Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

**Hampton Roads Bird Club**

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

Vol. 59, No. 2

November / December 2010

## November 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting—7:00 PM

### "Bluebird Trail Report"

Harry Carlson and Dot Silsby have revised a compact disc slide show describing their experiences in monitoring the HRBC Bluebird Trail at the Newport News City Park. They are sending them to bird clubs across the state. They hope that organizations already having trails will benefit from their experiences and that others may be encouraged to establish new trails.

**Host/Hostess:** tbd

## November Field Trips

### November 7 & 21, 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

### Nov. 13 (Sat.), 8:00 AM – Craney Island

We will be visiting Craney Island for our monthly field trip. Many of us haven't visited Craney for some time due to the construction, so it will be interesting to see the changes that have taken place. We'll discuss carpool options at the meeting, while others can meet at the entrance to Craney. From Newport News: take I-664 south to exit 8B (College Dr). Turn left on Hampton Road Parkway, and left on Pines Road. Turn right on Hedgerow Lane, then left on Craney Island Fuel and continue on to the entrance. Please sign up at the November meeting or call trip leader Ben Copeland at 851-7007 if attending.

### Nov. 14 (Sun), 8:00 AM – Hog Island

As a special second field trip for November, we will travel to Hog Island WMA. Meet in the parking lot of Surry Nuclear Power Plant at 8 AM and carpool into the area. 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.

## December 9<sup>th</sup>, Meeting—6:00 PM

### "Christmas Dinner and Slide Show"

Join us at the early start time of **6:00 PM** at Sandy Bottom for the Club's annual Christmas 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. Following 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.

(Nov. Field Trips Continued) 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. Please sign up at the November meeting or call trip leader Dave Youker at 344-9385 if attending.

## December Field Trips

### December 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

### Dec. 18 (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](mailto:cwbirds@cox.net)). Check out details on page 2.

## The President's Perch

*Marilyn White*

It seems that summer is FINALLY OVER and we are seeing some lovely fall days. Migration has nearly come and gone - but some of our winter residents are settling down in our back yards and our local parks. Yellow-rumped warblers are everywhere and redstarts are showing their colors. Take some time in these wonderful fall days to see what can be seen and while you are out there - watch for some of our beautiful fall color which is appearing and changing daily! What a beautiful time of the year to enjoy our natural beauty here in Virginia!

A big thank you to all the folks who volunteered in September to help with our display boards at the Master Gardner's event and the Newport News Fall Festival. Tom Claydon is always there to take care of our display board and set it up for us - and Ben and Mary Copeland, Jane Frigo, Lee and Meredith Bell, Dave and Vicki Youker helped to spread the word by manning the display. Coming up this weekend is "Earth Fest" at Sandy Bottom Nature Park - more thanks to our volunteers.

In September we enjoyed Mike Wilson who gave us a wonderful look into the lives and habits of the Red Cockaded Woodpecker - a little bird who is almost unique to our area because of its specialized habitat, and in October Teta Kain - always entertaining - shared her recent trip through the cloud forest of Ecuador with us. Her pictures were beautiful and her experiences kept us all entertained. We are fortunate to have so many fine speakers in our area to keep us always learning and always entertained.

Remember to keep water and food out for our feathered friends as the weather changes - also roosting boxes are good - especially in bad weather. Many winter residents will brighten your yards as you offer hospitality.

As the holidays approach may this season find you healthy and happy. We look forward to seeing everyone at the Christmas party. Good cheer and good birding.

Marilyn White

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## 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. 18<sup>th</sup>**. 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](mailto: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).

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## 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. 3-5.

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 (757-875-7649 or [cwbirds@cox.net](mailto:cwbirds@cox.net)) or Meredith Bell (804-642-2197 or [merandlee@cox.net](mailto:merandlee@cox.net)), to provide your information.

Check the VSO website for complete details at [www.virginiabirds.net](http://www.virginiabirds.net).

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**Tess Matteson**  
*By Mary Copeland*

Tess Matteson is a nature lover and happy to be outside in her yard as well as hiking her 'Matteson Trail'. This is a 3-mile course, open from 7 a.m. to sunset, and located around the Hampton Golf Course at 320 Butler Farm

Road. The trail was named in honor of Tess, who was instrumental in its development. She has planted bulbs and trees, as well as other flowering plants. She adds plant identification tags and picks up trash that hikers and bikers leave. She has been a faithful member of Hampton Roads Bird Club for many years, so let's help to keep her beloved trail a lovely place to walk and enjoy nature.

Tess has a son and a daughter. She lives in Hampton and enjoys her backyard birds as well as her creek teeming with shorebirds, rails, egrets and herons. She always enjoyed biking, hiking, and canoeing, and still swims at the Sentara Health and Fitness Center.

Tess celebrated her 88th birthday in August. She is a lovely lady, knows her plants and flowers, and is very knowledgeable on many subjects. We love you Tess and appreciate all you have done in your many years in our club. Keep on enjoying the birds coming to your trees and feeders. Thanks for mentoring the many people you touch, and your contributions to Thomas Nelson Community College.

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**Newport News Fall Festival Report**

*By Mary Copeland*

Hi everyone: Thank you Tom & Gail for your early efforts Saturday morning putting up the exhibit for HRBC. We appreciate all you do. Saturday was beautiful and thousands of people walked by our exhibit as they exited the shuttle buses close by. We probably gave out info to 30 - 50 who stopped by (after I yelled to them). Most of them were happy to talk about the birds & were quite impressed with the exhibit & all the beautiful pictures. Some even had birding questions and, hopefully, they will come to our next meeting. We will have to ask at the next couple of meetings if any of our visitors saw the exhibit. Sorry Sunday was rained out, but thanks to all who came to work. Ben & I enjoyed the day, took some pictures and enjoyed the funnel cake. Thanks

to Dave Youker and his wife for helping Sat. afternoon. David Hughes & Linda (Cape Henry) stopped by to visit; as well as a classmate of Nick Flanders. All the children enjoyed looking at Jane's birds and the children's booklets, etc. Thanks to Jim Hill for his feeders and bird houses for display. Thanks again to everyone.

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**Bob Ake's Big Year**

*By Ben Copeland*

Robert Ake is a retired professor of biology & ornithology from ODU and a member of the Cape Henry Audubon Society. In addition to participating in the Kiptopeke Challenge again this year (Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> with David Clark, to see how many species the different teams can get in 24 hrs) he is pursuing a Big Year to see as many North American species as possible in one year. As of Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>, the count is 712 species and you can follow along at:

<http://bobsbirds.blogspot.com/>

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**Field Trip Reports**

*By Dave Youker*

**Chippokes Plantation Field Trip.** A group of 9 birders got together on Sat, September 11<sup>th</sup> for our first trip of the year. The weather was great and 37 different species were tallied for the day. Highlights included pine, prairie and palm warblers, as well as spotting a wild turkey. Thanks to Laura Slaughter for leading this trip.

**Eastern Shore Field Trip.** Twelve members of the club visited the southern end of the Eastern Shore on Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup>. The wind was fairly strong and kept many of the smaller song birds hidden. Raptors were putting on good aerial displays, as the wind pushed them to lower elevations. Ramp Road provided nice viewing of white ibis and northern harriers flying over the marsh area. Migrant highlights included a blue-headed vireo at the Eastern Shore WMA Visitor Center, and some nice looks at red-breasted nuthatches and a brown creeper near the hawk watch at Kiptopeke SP. As is always the case this time of year, yellow-rumped warblers were extremely plentiful.

**Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) field trip**  
– Jan 15<sup>th</sup> 2011–

It's not too early to start thinking about the annual trek to the CBBT islands. A sign-up sheet and forms will be available at the November meeting. If you have any questions, contact the trip leader, Dave Youker, at 344-9385.

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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: **Richard Hudgins, 803 Riverside Drive, Newport News, VA 23606-3629.**

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 also be paid at Wild Wings Nature Store in the Hidenwood Shopping Center, Newport News, VA.

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.

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### 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.**

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