



Bird Notes

Newsletter of the
Hampton Roads Bird Club

www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org

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November / December 2012

November 8th Meeting—7:00 PM Teta Kaine, "Plover Paradise"



Join us on an exploration of Virginia's barrier islands. Lying just off the coast of Virginia's Eastern Shore these wild, desolate, wind-blown, and beautiful islands are places few Virginians ever visit. Teta accompanied members of the Virginia Department of Game and

Inland Fisheries while they conducted their annual surveys of nesting birds on those islands. The main focus of the studies was the summer population of the Piping Plover and Wilson's Plover. These surveys helped scientists to monitor the rise and fall of the colonies, and determine the best ways to protect the adults and young during the peak nesting period.

Host/Hostess: Jane Frigo & Elisa Enders

November Field Trips

November 4 & 18, 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. 3 (Sat.), 7:30 AM – Grandview/Ft. Monroe

Our "water" oriented Field Trip will take us to Grandview and Fort Monroe. We'll begin at Grandview Beach at low tide (one mile, round trip). Then on to Fort Monroe to survey the rip raps from the seawall by the Chamberlin and finally ascend the high ramparts for another mile walk (with the bay on one side and tree-canopy level views on the other). The excursion should last until about noon.

From I64, take exit 263 onto W Mercury Blvd (toward the coliseum) and go 3.4 miles. Turn left onto Fox Hill Rd and go 3.0 miles. Turn left onto Beach Rd, go 2.7 miles, and shortly after two speed bumps turn left at roundabout onto State Park Dr and proceed to end.

Please contact Tom Charlock by phone (757-599-3418) or email (TomCharlock@gmail.com) if you wish to attend.

December 13th, Meeting—6:00 PM "Christmas Dinner"



Photo credit: [Steve took it / Foter](http://Steve.took.it/Foter)

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.

Host/Hostess: Phyllis Roth & Marilyn White

December Field Trips

December 2 & 16, 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. 15 (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, **Nancy Gruttman-Tyler** 850-3861 or gruttmantyler@gmail.com. Check out details on page 2.

The President's Perch

By Dave Youker

By the time this newsletter is published, we should be witnessing more and more winter migrants arriving in the Hampton Roads area. The purported low seed crop in the north should result in more northerly species pushing further south. We've already witnessed larger than normal numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches. For the first time in 10 years, I have a Red-breasted Nuthatch visiting my yard. There have already been reports of Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins on the Eastern Shore and Piedmont regions.

This time of year brings cooler weather and often less rain. So don't forget to provide a fresh water source and add some suet to your normal feeding regime.

I hope during the October meeting you got a good feel for how involved our club is in furthering avian conservation and how involved we are within the community. If you're not already supporting some of these initiatives, consider getting involved. It's very rewarding to see firsthand how you've improved the birding environment in some fashion. It's also the best way to improve your birding skills.

Go Green Expo 2012



On 22 Sep, several club members participated in the 2012 Go Green Expo. The Expo has grown significantly over the years, and our professionally engineered exhibit drew a good number of visitors. Our club had the opportunity to inform attendees about our field trips, Sunday morning walks, conservation activities, and about the fun we have getting together and sharing birding adventures. Special thanks to Jane Frigo and Hilary Propst for sharing their birding enthusiasm with the many visitors.

The Matteson Trail

By Dave Youker



Recently, the Matteson Trail has undergone some improvements. The trail is named in honor of a long-time club member, Tess Matteson. For years, Tess has been monitoring and maintaining the trail. The kiosks on the trail had fallen into disrepair, but have recently been replaced. The new kiosks have been outfitted with pictures of some of the 80 species of birds that can be found along the trail. The Matteson Trail is a paved walkway around the Hampton Golf Course. Plan a visit to walk the trail and enjoy the birds that occupy this varied habitat.

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. 15th**. 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.

Nancy Gruttman-Tyler is the coordinator/compiler for the Newport News Count. Contact her (850-3861 or gruttmantyler@gmail.com), 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).

VSO Va. Beach Field Trip

The VSO'S annual field trip to Virginia Beach will be Friday, December 7 through Sunday, December 9, 2012. An outstanding weekend is planned with a Friday afternoon field trip to the Whitehurst Tract for those arriving early. Field trips include a visit to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) on Saturday and a half day at Back Bay NWR and False Cape State Park on Sunday.

You do need to sign up in advance because two trips have limited space and require a nominal fee. See registration details below or on the VSO web site: <http://www.virginiabirds.net/index.html>

Friday Afternoon Field Trip: Friday afternoon's field trip will leave the hotel at 12:15 PM for the Whitehurst Tract.

Saturday Field Trips

1. Morning on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Fee is \$10 per person to cover the cost of the security guards. This trip is limited to 45 people. Register with Clark White ASAP so you can complete the security form and return it to him by November 17.
2. Afternoon on the Eastern Shore. 12 noon - 4 pm. Meet at Kiptopeke State Park at noon to join the group coming from the CBBT trip.

Sunday Field Trips

1. Back Bay NWR and False Cape State Park. 8 am. Trip limited to 24 people.
2. First Landing State Park. 8 am.

Hotel Accommodations

The Country Inn and Suites at 1801 Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach, will be the host hotel. Oceanfront rooms with private balconies will be available at \$84 plus tax. Check-in time is 4:00 PM and check-out is 11:00 AM. It will be necessary to check out on Sunday before leaving on the field trip. Those planning to stay at the hotel should make reservations by November 17, 2012, specifying they are with the VSO. The hotel phone numbers are (757) 437-9100 or (800) 456-4000.

Register By November 17

Register with the trip coordinator, Clark White, by US mail or e-mail by November 17. Include your name, street or e-mail address and telephone number, the field trips you are requesting and a check for the cost of the trips (if applicable) payable to Clark White.

Send registration to:

Clark White, 101 Brookstone Court, Yorktown, Virginia 23693

Phone: [757-875-7649](tel:757-875-7649) or email: cwbirds@cox.net

Field Trip Reports

By Tom Charlock

Greensprings Field Trip

Our first field trip of the season covered the 3.5 mile Greensprings Interpretive Trail in James City County where a total of 32 species were observed. The Trail grounds were the site of the Battle of Green Spring (1781), wherein forces under General "Mad" Anthony Wayne were ambushed by elements of the British army of Earl Cornwallis, and the highlight of our trip was a figurative echo of that battle. While half a dozen sentry crows were atop the tree canopy at the far end of a farm field, a juvenile eastern Red-shouldered Hawk coursed above the field. A single "Tory" crow then sallied to harass the larger young rebel. The repeated twists of the aerial dual presented excellent views of the juvenile hawk from various angles. From below: an overall lack of color, thinner and lighter tail bands than for an adult, glaringly translucent windows near dark wing tips, and wings generally pale at the leading edge. The perspective as if above: tail bands with red aspects, and buffy crescents near the still dark "fingers" at the wing tips. The crow eventually gave up the fight and was not relieved by others.

Eastern Shore Field Trip.

The 14 Club members on the trip were well pleased by their total of 91 species. The Sunset Beach Resort had marked our first morning stop—an unsuccessful, but fun chase for a Red Crossbill reported on ebird. At Kiptopeke, we focused on the trails; delighting in the Pied Billed Grebe, Ruddy Duck, Blue- & Green-winged Teals, and low-flying Tree Swallows at Taylor Pond. We then visited Oyster at low tide, where some had their first-ever sighting of White-crowned Sparrow. Patient telescope use at the edge of a newly plowed field on Magotha Road provided views of American Pipit, Eastern Meadowlark, and Horned Lark. Bayberry bushes at a narrow channel of Magotha Bay served as the movie set for rapturously close displays by some 500-1000 Tree Swallows. The sun angle was perfect for showing the blue and green on the flanks of these birds; en mass, they repeatedly landed, feasted and flew, as if to a staccato beat.



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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 September 1st to August 31st. **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.

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