



# Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

**Hampton Roads Bird Club**

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

Vol. 63, No. 1

September/October 2014

## September 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting

**6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program**

at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

**Teta Kain**

**"Feeding Wild Birds".**

It is hard to name a local presenter who has informed and engaged Club members about nature more effectively and endearingly than Teta. Earlier, she's wrapped our attentions about spiders and butterflies; this time, birds. She will focus on the species that are commonly encountered at feeders. Teta gives tips on what to feed birds, as well as on the field marks and behavior patterns for identification. She will address special tricks, not only help to attract more birds year round, but also how to help keep them safe from predators as they feed and seek shelter in your yard..

Meeting information from Brenda Gervais  
Hosted by HRBC Board Executive Committee

## HRBC Outdoors September-October

### Regular Bird Walks in Newport News Park

The first and third Sunday of every month 7:00 AM  
Meet in large parking lot behind Ranger Station  
Walk Leader: Jane Frigo ([birderjane@gmail.com](mailto:birderjane@gmail.com)  
757-873-0721)

**Field Trip to Hog Island on Sept. 13** (see page 2)

**Field Trip to Kiptopeke on Oct. 4** (see page 2)

Contact Stuart Sweetman ([nnva4x4@aol.com](mailto:nnva4x4@aol.com)  
757-595-1677) about Field Trips

## October 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting

**6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program**

at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

**Pete Peterman**

**"Trip to Ecuador and Galapagos".**

Remember those haunting drawings of Darwin's finches? Well, our own Pete Peterman has photographed 12 of the 13 said species of finch that are endemic to the Galapagos Islands. He and his wife Charm also snapped the 4 types of local mockingbirds, and many others, during a birder's journey of a lifetime this past summer. Pete reports that eco-touring in the Galapagos is very tightly controlled; and its birds have amazingly little fear of people. His tale is worth the hearing and seeing.

## Feeding Wild Birders

Teta Kain's presentation will include "special tricks" for feeding birds. But alas, who magics the feeding of us, too? It's Virginia Boyles, our Club leader for Hospitality. Virginia seeks volunteers to provide snacks at monthly meetings; and is forming a committee to organize our Holiday Dinner in December. She will circulate a sign up sheet at the meeting on Sept. 11. I promise to then sign for my favorite, bread and butter.

## The President's Perch

by Dave Youker

As you read this article, you probably have noticed that some migrants have already graced our area. Recent sightings include Pectoral Sandpipers,

Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, Piping Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, and a host of other shorebirds. The passerines and hawks can't be far behind.

September also brings opportunities to get out there with fellow birders to explore some new areas or just revisit some more familiar places. In addition to our own club field trips, there are a couple of annual events to consider. The Kiptopeke Challenge will be held on September 20; the goal being to see as many species as possible on the Eastern Shore during a 24 hour period. Team donations help conservation efforts of the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory (CVWO). Another event is the Eastern Shore Wildlife & Birding Festival held the second weekend in October. If you haven't participated in either of these events, please consider to put them on your calendar.

As always, your club values your input. With a new slate of officers putting together programs, field trips and outreach activities this coming year, your feedback is encouraged. One thing I want to highlight is our new Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hampton-Roads-Bird-Club/295255073989087> which was originated by Jessica Rodgers (Club Publicity); further development depends on our own insertion of good content, so visit often and provide some. It's easy to click to and from the Facebook page and the regular HRBC homepage.

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### **Upcoming Field Trips**

HRBC field trips this year will be led by Stuart Sweetman and Andy Hawkins. Here's the target list for September through June, followed by detailed notices for the first two occasions. If you become aware of outstanding issues regarding the locations/dates, please inform Stuart or Andy.

Hog Island (Sept.13)

Kiptopeke (Oct. 4)

Grandview (Nov. 15)

Christmas Bird Count (led by Nancy Gruttman-Tyler, Dec. TBD)

Back Bay (Jan. 10)

Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands (Feb. 14)

Craney Island (Mar. 14)

Great Dismal Swamp (Apr. 11)

Richmond's James River Parks (May 16)

Club Picnic at Newport News Park (Jun. 13)

### **Field Trip to Hog Island and Ragged Island Wildlife Management Areas**

**Saturday, 8:00 AM, Sept. 13, 2014**

By Stuart Sweetman

The September HRBC field trip will be to Hog Island and Ragged Island Wildlife Management Areas on September 13th. The trip is scheduled for 8:00 AM, but the group will meet at the Huntington Beach parking lot in Newport News at 6:45 and depart the lot at 7:15 for the 45 minute drive. Directions from Newport News: Cross the James River Bridge and make a right onto Route 32. Take that to Route 10 and go past Smithfield to Surry County about 5 miles past the county line to Hog Island Road on the right. Go all the way to the end through the power plant checkpoint to the Island.

There will be a fee for this trip. The admission to Hog Island is \$51 per group, so we'll divide that among those attending. Please sign up at a monthly Club meeting or contact Stuart Sweetman ([nnva4x4@aol.com](mailto:nnva4x4@aol.com) or 757 595-1677).

### **Field Trip to Kiptopeke & Lower Eastern Shore**

**Saturday, 8:00 AM, October 4, 2014**

By Stuart Sweetman

The October HRBC field trip is to Kiptopeke State Park and the lower Eastern Shore on October 4th at 8:00 AM. The group will meet at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel South Island toll plaza at 7:00 AM. We will leave at 7:30 and head to Kiptopeke State Park parking lot. From there we will decide the next destination based on tides, weather and birding reports of the previous week. Possible locations include the Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge, Ramp Road or Sunset Beach.

If you wish to attend this field trip, please sign up at a monthly Club meeting or contact Stuart Sweetman ([nnva4x4@aol.com](mailto:nnva4x4@aol.com) or 757 595-1677).

## **Dues for Membership are Due**

by John Adair

With the exception of a few early birds and new Club members who joined after April, the annual dues for all renewing members of 2014-15 are due in September (i.e., now). The fee is \$15 for an individual (\$20 per family). In addition to paying our dues at an upcoming meeting, there are THREE additional ways to submit dues: 1) Mail renewal form (optional) and check to: John Adair, HRBC Treasurer, 109 Nansemond Turn, Yorktown VA 23693, (757) 224-8920; 2) Drop off payment at Wild Wings Nature Store, 27 Hidenwood Shopping Center, Newport News VA 23606, (757) 595-3060; or, 3) Drop off payment at Wild Birds Unlimited, 3120 Kiln Creek Pkwy, Yorktown VA 23693, (757) 875-1936. Renewal forms are available at the stores and in the HRBC newsletters.

Thanks to our membership dues (the Club's primary source of annual income), we were able to support our annual \$500 contribution to an educational scholarship/internship program as well as contributions to other organizations including Virginia Society of Ornithology, Costal Virginia Wildlife Organization, Bluebird Society of Virginia, and Friends of Sandy Bottom. Your volunteer Treasurer thanks you in advance for your ontime payment.

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## **Book Review**

by Nancy Gruttman-Tyler

### **"Red-Tails in Love, Pale Male's Story —a True Wildlife Drama in Central Park"**

If you enjoy reading about birds, but are perhaps not ready for another scientific field guide or "how to..." book, *Red-Tails in Love* by Marie Winn may be just what you're looking for. It's filled with interesting "stuff" about birds in New York's 843-acre Central Park. Annually, about 190 species are found in the park, with nearly 90 additional species recorded in the past century.

As the title promises, the book's highlight is the story of the most famous Red-Tailed Hawk in the world, Pale Male. The author, Marie Winn, is one of Central Park's bird watching "Regulars" and she spins a good tale (no pun intended) while describing the phenomenon of raptors nesting on a building façade above the noisy traffic on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue by Central Park.

Following the initial discovery of nesting efforts at an improbable location, the watchers at the "hawk bench" across the street experience a gamut of emotions including amazement, anticipation, excitement, concern, disappointment, exhilaration and enthusiasm. When the nest is threatened by human intervention, the hawk watchers unite and seek support for their favorite wildlife.

The most interesting aspect of the book, for me, is that Winn throughout casually presents much birding information about many species in the park. She describes seasonal arrivals and departures and gives "birdy" details that can only be learned by patient, dedicated observation at a specific geographic locale.

The book is easy to read—formatted like a play with short theatrical devices (Prologue, Acts, Intermission, and Curtain Call) that emphasize the dramatic aspect of the story. Beside Pale Male and his seasonal mates, the cast of characters includes the Central Park Regulars who are eager to share their birding enthusiasm with the park's visitors and casual passers-by. The drama gained international attention and has been documented in a one-hour film about Pale Male and Central Park's avian world. Today, Pale Male is still alive and has had 8 nesting partners since 1992.

For more info, Google "Pale Male Central Park" and click on Wikipedia for a good summary of his life. The Wiki piece has photos taken on July 14, 2014 of Pale Male and his most recent fledgling, Bugsy. An updated edition of Winn's book was published in April 2005. The new edition follows up on Pale Male and his ladies; and has bird listings in the Park, month-by-month. My copy cost \$13.95.

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## Last June's HRBC Annual Picnic

True to form, the annual HRBC Picnic (early on site field trip, group assembly and installation of new officers, then fire and smoke followed by good food) was held at Newport News Park on Saturday, June 14. The photo shows, from the left, trip guides and expert VSO birders Meredith (green top) and Lee Bell; Marilyn Adair in the center; and all peering through binoculars in search of those members who'd failed to show. There were plenty of birds. But a few missing people had incorrectly assumed that the birding part of our yearly fete would follow the time/location sequence of Jane Frigo's twice per month Sunday bird walk. Birds aren't the only creatures of habit.



*Search of familiar waters before the Annual Picnic*

The lost birders eventually fell into focus. And back at the home fires, some of the elaborate food preparation for the day fell at first, too: Like Dot Silby's dish of baked beans spilling over a cooler and slow cooker on the way to the picnic; fortunately Betty Evans (daughter of HRBC Hospitality director Virginia Boyles) cleaned it right up. Our food orchestrators included Brenda Gervias, Marilyn Adair, and Donna Buchanan; Phyllis Roth and Dave Youker brought some furniture; John Adair and Bill Boeh grilled what we ate. There was a bit of olfactory temptation from a nearby pavilion, where a Chinese-American society was roasting an entire pig; but I had little doubt that we enjoyed the better meal.



*Before the watermelon came: Jane and Keith Frigo with Sandy Robertson*

On to our installation of HRBC officers, the volunteer avian civil servants, at least those of which we can see in the photo below. Stuart Sweetman, the new Field Trip Coordinator, is standing on the left, next to the new Vice-President, Brenda Gervais (the VP sets up the speakers for monthly meeting); then President Dave Youker and Treasurer John Adair. Bill Boeh is the new Secretary, standing next to Hospitality director Virginia Boyles. The gentleman seated to the right of Virginia is Richard Sweetman, Stuart's dad. On the far right, with her back to camera, is Gwen Harris, HRBC officer for Membership; she brought watermelon.



## Report of Field Trip to Richmond's James River Parks (5/10/2014)

A dozen HRBC birders left Tidewater at 7:00 AM on May 10 for Richmond's fine James River Park system, approaching by a circuitous route to avoid a special downtown, mass running event. Seeking alternate views and hearings of the season's arrival of warblers, we'd driven well inland hoping that a fast-flow riparian environment, with its quick change in elevation over short distances, would deliver. It did. We observed 75 bird species, including 12 warblers. The showers that threatened all day mercifully restrained themselves once we'd arrived at each of the 3 locations we visited.

Our first stop was Reedy Creek, where we shared the car park with kayakers; and the steep, narrow, wooded Buttermilk Trail with joggers and mountain bicyclists. At our turn-around point, we trudged toward a multi-story steel tower, seeking its top-of-canopy perspective of birds. While most were distracted with panting on up, Jane Frigo saw an Eastern Screech Owl just off our path, in the hollow of a deciduous tree. The sleepy Owl was most cooperative, dreamingly checking us out, right eye first, and then left. We returned to Reedy Creek by a different route, using a level dirt road, along which the vegetation was not as dense. The views of Chestnut-sided Warblers were much enjoyed. The group's powers of concentration for warbler song – and patience for spotting them - then seemed at its peak.



*Eastern Screech Owl (photo by John Adair)*

The muddy wetlands to the east of Pony Pasture Rapids came next. A trailside drama marked our entry: Black Snake writhing up an old snag, much to the loud protest of Carolina Wrens, Northern Cardinals, and Carolina Chickadees. Must've been the end of someone's nest. Other than mud and the drama, this stop had little to offer, except for repeated, excellent views of Indigo Bunting across an open meadow. The photo shows how happy John Adair, Stuart Sweetman, Jane Frigo, Tracy Tate, Phyllis Roth, Sandy Robertson, Bill Ferris, Sandi DeCarlo, Dave Youker, Rexanne Bruno and Jason Strickland were to emerge from the muck that Tom Charlock led them into.



Then came, from a trailhead by Riverside Drive and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, an easy amble over boulders and a wood-surfaced foot bridge to historic and scenic Belle Isle. A Baltimore Oriole was seen. The fast flying insect eaters - Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow and Barn Swallow – came into view. Nest building by large numbers of Cliff Swallows (not typically seen in Tidewater) was very much in evidence, over the pedestrian suspension bridge connecting the north end of Belle Isle with downtown Richmond

Species list (75) for HRBC field trip to Richmond (5/10/2014):

Canada Goose	Pileated Woodpecker	Prothonotary Warbler
Wood Duck	Acadian Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Mallard	Eastern Phoebe	American Redstart
Wild Turkey	Eastern Kingbird	Northern Parula
Double-crested Cormorant	Warbling Vireo	Magnolia Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Red-eyed Vireo	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Green Heron	Blue Jay	Blackpoll Warbler
Black Vulture	Fish Crow	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Purple Martin	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Osprey	Tree Swallow	Black-throated Green Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Eastern Towhee
Virginia Rail	Cliff Swallow	White-throated Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Barn Swallow	Summer Tanager
Solitary Sandpiper	Carolina Chickadee	Scarlet Tanager
Sanderling	Tufted Titmouse	Northern Cardinal
Caspian Tern	White-breasted Nuthatch	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Rock Pigeon	Carolina Wren	Indigo Bunting
Mourning Dove	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Red-winged Blackbird
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Eastern Bluebird	Common Grackle
Eastern Screech Owl	Swainson's Thrush	Brown-headed Cowbird
Chimney Swift	American Robin	Orchard Oriole
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Gray Catbird	Baltimore Oriole
Red-bellied Woodpecker	European Starling	House Finch
Downy Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush	American Goldfinch
Northern Flicker	Black-and-white Warbler	House Sparrow

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Board: (7/12-6/15) & Field Trip Coordinator	Stuart Sweetman	<a href="mailto:nnva4x4@aol.com">nnva4x4@aol.com</a>	(757) 595-1677

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: **John Adair, 109 Nansemond Turn, Yorktown, Virginia 23693**. Membership is from September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</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 in The Pavilion Shops in 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 6:30 PM.

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### Hampton Roads Bird Club – Membership Form

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

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

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

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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