



Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC)

www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org and on Facebook

Vol. 64, No. 5

May/June 2016

May 12th Meeting
6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program
at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

June 4th Annual Picnic
Noon Meal 7:00 AM Birdwalk
at Newport News Park

"Birds of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest and Pantanal"

By Pete Peterman

Pete and Charm Peterman recently returned from a two-week birding trip to Brazil. This presentation will feature the birds of the Atlantic Forest, to include Iguazu Falls on both the Argentina and Brazil side, plus the Pantanal, the world's largest freshwater wetlands, 20 times the size of the Everglades. These environments were home to a wide variety of birds – shore birds, raptors, underbrush & canopy birds. Antbirds, Ovenbirds, and Spinetails are a few of the families that are different from what we see in North America, but the Herons, Egrets, and Warblers are recognizable even if some are a different species.

Please see page 3 for more on this meeting.

Hosted by Rachel Colestock



Chestnut-eared Aracari (Pete Peterman)

By Katrina Dash

This year, the HRBC's annual picnic will be held on Saturday, June 4, 2016 at picnic shelter #3 in Newport News Park. Shelter #3 is located near the parking lot where the club meets for Sunday walks. It is near the water and next to the shelter where the picnic was held last year. This shelter is a little smaller than the one we used last year, so it is recommended that you bring chairs for additional seating if possible.

This year, our morning bird walk will be led by Jason Strickland and will begin at 7:00 AM to allow for additional birding before the heat of the day. You are welcome to join the group whenever you arrive, so come early and work up an appetite before the meal. The picnic will begin around noon and the club will provide everything for burgers and hotdogs. A sign-up sheet will be available at the May meeting for everyone to sign-up for an appetizer, side dish, drink, or dessert that they would like to bring. Following the picnic, the new club officers will be announced. Please come out to celebrate the end of another great year and see everyone one last time before our summer break.

Picnic Planning Committee: There is currently no one signed up to serve on the picnic planning committee. This is one of the club's largest events and takes some work to organize and arrange. If you are willing to help Katrina Dash make this event memorable by helping with planning or setting up, please contact her at 915-471-1287 or kweber427@gmail.com.

HRBC Outdoors May-August

Regular bird walks in Newport News Park

First and third Sundays of *every* month 7:00 AM.
Meet in big parking lot behind the ranger station.
Walk leader: Jane Frigo (birderjane@gmail.com
757-873-0721)

Peninsula-wide Spring Bird Count

Saturday, 7:00 AM May 7, 2016
An annual HRBC effort, splitting our area into 13
sectors for a one-day blitz. To participate, contact
Nancy Gruttman-Tyler (gruttmantyler@gmail.com
cell [757-344-8879](tel:757-344-8879))
or Bill Boeh (dolphrog1@yahoo.com
cell [757-951-7959](tel:757-951-7959))

Field Trip to Richmond's Belle Isle (look right)

Saturday, 7:00 AM May 14, 2016
Contact Stuart Sweetman (nnva4x4@aol.com
757-595-1677)

Pre-picnic walk at Newport News Park (page 1)

Saturday, 7:00 AM June 4, 2016
Contact Jason Strickland
(jmstrickland228@gmail.com 757-739-6939)

President's Perch

By Dave Youker

As we approach the summer hiatus, some changes are afoot. Some new faces will be occupying positions within the club, and I hope you'll provide them with great support. After all, this is your club. That sounds awfully trite, but it's true. The club is only as good as its members want it to be. The more interaction and feedback from all members, the more robust and interesting the club will become.

If you don't want to hold an official position in the club, I encourage you to at least be a vocal supporter. You'll get more out of being a member, and the club as a whole will benefit. I look forward to hearing from you over the summer, so we can prepare for another exciting season starting in September.



Wood Warbler (G.-L. Leclerc, 18th cent.)

Field Trip to Richmond's Belle Isle and James River Parks

Saturday, 7:00 AM, May 14, 2016

By Stuart Sweetman

The next field trip for the HRBC will be to the James River Park System in Richmond, Virginia, on May 14. We'll start on the Reedy Creek/Buttermilk trail. This part of the park system has elevated trails that put you at tree top level for observing migrating warbler species. Belle Isle comes next; it has superb walking trails that overlook the James River, as well as a foot bridge that suspends under the highways for great views of the river below, and a local nesting colony of Cliff Swallows that have been there for the past few years. This is mostly a walking trip once we get the Richmond, so proper shoes are needed as well as long pants in case the bugs are out. Some of the trails are steep, rocky and narrow, and we've encountered poison ivy on them during previous field trips.

It generally takes close to 75 minutes to get up to Richmond so ***we will need to leave our carpool assembly area behind the ranger station at the Newport News Park no later than 6:00 AM*** to reach the park system by 7:00 AM. On previous trips here, we arrived later and were informed by local birders, of how many warbler species that we'd missed. The physical address for Reedy Creek/Buttermilk Trail, our first stop, is 4000 Riverside Drive Richmond, Virginia. This address will need to be entered into GPS or smart phone devices for directions. Those who do not use such devices will

need to pick up printed out copies of the directions at the May 12th HRBC meeting. This trip has been a growing favorite among those who have attended in the past, with great birds and wonderful scenery of Richmond's James River Park System. The sign up sheet for this trip will be again at the May meeting. Questions about the trip can be sent to Stuart Sweetman at NNVA4x4@aol.com or call me at 757-595-1677 and leave a message.



Halequin at CBBT (by John Adair)

More on May 12 Club Meeting

Book Sale and Raffle, but We need helpers to provide snacks

By Katrina Dash

This is a reminder that we will be having a book sale and raffle to raise funds for the club during our May meeting. If you have books that you would like to donate for the sale, or other bird-related items that you would like to donate for the raffle, please contact Katrina Dash (kweber427@gmail.com, 915-471-1287) or bring the items to the May meeting.

Our members have been fantastic about bringing snacks and helping with set up, but we need an additional host for May 12 at Sandy Bottom to complement Rachel Colestock. Again, please just contact me, Katrina, to provide support for the healthy spring appetites of our birders.

Make Some History

By Dave Youker

Have you ever read about a historic birding event and wished you had been part of it? Here is your chance. Virginia has initiated its 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA), and birders of all levels are needed to make it a success. The last Virginia BBA was conducted almost 30 years ago. The 2nd Atlas starts this year and runs through 2020. We are sure to see changes from the 1st Atlas, given the changes attributable to development, climate change, sea-level rise, and other environmental phenomenon. Volunteers are needed to help document these changes by finding evidence of breeding bird behavior. Virginia has been divided into blocks based on the USGS grid system, and volunteers will be surveying these blocks to help determine the existence and distribution of breeding birds across the state. If this sounds like something you want to be part of, come to the May meeting and learn more. Also visit the BBA website at VABBA2.org. You'll find a great deal of information to help you in this endeavor. You can also sign-up to be responsible for monitoring a block. Sign-up as an individual or with some friends. You can also contribute by monitoring your own backyard or your neighborhood. This is a great opportunity to learn about the behavior of birds - and to have some fun doing it.



Le Cardinal huppe (Leclerc)



Like all else in the Old Dominion, the Hampton Roads Bird Club is historic. And we have a line of Presidents, too. The few club presidents that I've known personally are all expert birders. What does it take, beyond such expertise, to be the point leader of our club? Basically a lot of patience, responsibility and dedication to community service. If you run into a HRBC president of some years back, give them your nod of thanks; and when appropriate, do call their past service to the attention of new members.

HRBC Past Presidents

1951-1952	Mike Mitchell	1977-1979	Evelyn Stalnaker
1952-1953	Ray Beasley	1979-1981	Betty Hodges
1953-1954	Charles Hacker	1981-1983	Jim Hadden
1954-1955	Doris Smith	1983-1985	Teta Kain
1955-1956	R.J. Wicke	1985-1985	Peter Christensen
1956-1957	Walter Smith	1985-1987	Paul McAllister
1957-1958	Joe Sledge	1987-1988	Joan Summerville
1958-1959	M.E. Hathaway	1988-1989	Connie Christian
1959-1960	Mike Mitchell	1989-1991	Jim Hale
1960-1961	Charles Hacker	1991-1993	Carolyn Friedhaber
1961-1962	Ray Beasley	1993-1994	George Steinmetz
1962-1964	Dorothy Mitchell	1994-1995	Hayes Williams
1964-1965	Mike Mitchell	1995-1999	Phyllis Simonetta-Roth
1965-1965	Dorothy Mitchell	1999-2002	Lynn Chandler
1965-1966	Doris Smith	2002-2005	Jane Frigo
1966-1967	Ash Rawls	2005-2006	Tim Christensen
1967-1968	Mitchell Byrd	2006-2008	Meredith Bell
1968-1969	Gustav Hall	2008-2009	Julie Breeden
1969-1971	Brad Hawkins	2009-2010	Mary Copeland
1971-1974	Dot Silsby	2010-2012	Marilyn White
1974-1975	Hosea Hernandez		
1975-1977	Susan Sturm		

Report of Field Trip to The CBBT Islands, Willis Wharf and Brownsville Seaside Farm (2/27/16)

By Stuart Sweetman

The February field trip of the HRBC was our winter trip to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) islands and The Eastern Shore of Virginia. The winter trip to the CBBT is when we visit the restricted islands # 2,3 and 4. This winter trip has grown in popularity, so much that I had to remove my 15-person limit and open it up to two groups of 15 people this year. This is one of the hardest trips to organize since its popularity has grown, and all the restrictions need to be met 8 weeks prior to the trip. With all that it took to organize, the extra large group successfully met at the South toll plaza at 7:30 AM as instructed. Names were checked and verified with our police escort. Our motorcade of maybe 10 cars proceeded to island #2 to see what type of wintering waterfowl that inhabits the waters of the tunnel islands. Each stop at the three islands last up to one hour so we generally have plenty of time to see what we came for. This year it wasn't as cold as it was the year before, but a guaranteed strong wind will always make it feel colder. We at least had bright sunshine which made our sought after species such as Harlequin and Long-tailed ducks that much more spectacular. We ended up with 10 or more duck species as well as the resident Harbor Seals at the tunnel islands.



Harbor seal (by John Adair)

The group left the islands and headed North for a pit stop at the visitor's center on the south tip of the peninsula. Some of the group decided to proceed to the next stop, and some headed on their way well satisfied from what they had already seen. The second stop was at Willis Wharf in the town of Exmore, Va. Willis Wharf has become a popular location for one species in particular. That species is the Marbled Godwit and our group was not disappointed. The tide was high but it didn't deter the dozens of Godwits and Willets that gave us all good looks. We recharged with sandwiches and snacks before heading to our third location of the day. The group left the wharf and headed South down Seaside Rd. to Brownsville Seaside Farm which is the Headquarters of The Nature Conservancy's facilities on Virginia's Eastern Shore. This location was new for the group and it turned out to be a walking event. The sun was bright and the air had warmed into the 60s, so there weren't any complaints. This location had such diverse habitats ranging from wooded forest, tidal salt marshes and a brackish water pond. We were able to pick up some woodland species as well as a Northern Harrier working the marsh, but we felt this area would be best visited during migration season to be more productive. It was such a beautiful day and location that we didn't really care how productive it was. We left this spot knowing that it will be visited again by some and headed to our last stop of the day. Cape Charles

was not to be seen today as the day grew short and stamina to continue had run out. Those of us left did manage to stop at the public island of the CBBT on our way back home. We picked up a couple new birds there but we were thrilled to be able to watch a Canadian submarine pass over the tunnel heading back out to sea. It was a perfect day for everyone who attended. We managed 65 species with 28 participants for the day.

Participants: Stuart Sweetman, Ken Lipshy, Geoff Giles, Bill Boeh, Tom Charlock, Michael Iwanik, Vickie Gullet, Harry and Rochelle Colestock, John and Marilyn Adair, Jessica Ausura, Ernie Miller, Justin Ausura, Jane Frigo, Anthony Nixon, Hayes and Joyce Williams, Nancy Gruttman-Tyler, Dave Youker, Elizabeth Wilkins, Jacques Van Montfrans, Richard Korpi, Phil Lehman, Lisa Billow, Patty Von Ohlen, John and Kim Hogan.



Appreciating Bright Sunlight in Winter (by John Adair)

Species list for CBBT Islands and Eastern Shore (2/27/16):

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Canada Goose | Northern Harrier | Downy Woodpecker |
| Mallard | Sharp-shinned Hawk | American Crow |
| Lesser Scaup | Red-tailed Hawk | Fish Crow |
| Harlequin Duck | American Kestrel | Carolina Chickadee |
| Surf Scoter | Killdeer | Brown-headed Nuthatch |
| White-winged Scoter | American Oystercatcher | Carolina Wren |
| Black Scoter | Yellowlegs (sp) | Marsh Wren |
| Long-tailed Duck | Willet | Eastern Bluebird |
| Bufflehead | Marbled Godwit | American Robin |
| Hooded Merganser | Ruddy Turnstone | Gray Catbird |
| Red-breasted Merganser | Sanderling | Northern Mockingbird |
| Ruddy Duck | Purple Sandpiper | European Starling |
| Red-throated Loon | Dunlin | Cedar Waxwing |
| Common Loon | American Woodcock | Yellow-rumped Warbler |
| Horned Grebe | Ring-billed Gull | Song Sparrow |
| Northern Gannet | Herring Gull | Swamp Sparrow |
| Double-crested Cormorant | Great Black-backed Gull | White-throated Sparrow |
| Great Cormorant | Forster's Tern | Northern Cardinal |
| Great Blue Heron | Rock Pigeon | Red-winged Blackbird |
| Black Vulture | Mourning Dove | Common Grackle |
| Turkey Vulture | Belted Kingfisher | Brown-headed Cowbird |
| Bald Eagle | Red-bellied Woodpecker | House Finch |

Report of Field Trip to Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge and False Cape State Park (3/12/16)

By Stuart Sweetman

The March field trip for the HRBC was to Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and False Cape State Park (SP). The group met at 7:30 AM at the visitor's center of the refuge to sunny skies with temps. in the low 50s. A strong breeze off the water gave a nice bite to the air. The winter months had been unusually warm, so frozen lakes and marshland were not an issue as in the past. The impoundments of the refuge are closed to the public during the winter months except for scheduled open air tram tours. Tram tours for special groups are scheduled two months in advance running from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM. There is an 8 dollar per person fee and a 24-person limit. Our guide met us at 7:30 for a head count and to collect money. We boarded the tram and got underway for our trip through the impoundments of the refuge ending up at False Cape SP. The first gate to enter the refuge was by the maintenance area. This area was where the reported Lark Sparrow was hanging out with Field Sparrows. Our whole group was treated to this rarity that stuck out on a tree branch posing for us like he knew that we were there just to see him. The tram continued on stopping every hundred yards or so for us to observe the waterfowl that populated open waters. American Coots were numerous, as well as Gadwall and Blue-winged Teal. A large group of Tundra Swans was still present, and three Mute Swans were mixed in showing contrast of the two species. We made our way down past the refuge to False Cape State Park where the habitat changed from wetland to pine forest. March is still early for migrants, but the Pine Warblers were getting a jump on spring vocalization. Down at False Cape SP there is a real nice visitor's center with refreshments and clean bathrooms. The air was still cold but don't tell that to the four Cottonmouths that were just off the road near the canal that bordered the area. Our guide told us that they are always there even when the temps. are down in the 40s. So much for being cold blooded I guess. We left False Cape and headed back to the refuge for the return trip. We were treated by a couple hundred White Ibis along the way to go along with the single Glossy Ibis that was seen earlier. Pied-billed Grebes and Northern Shovelers were seen along the way.



Lark sparrow (John Adair)

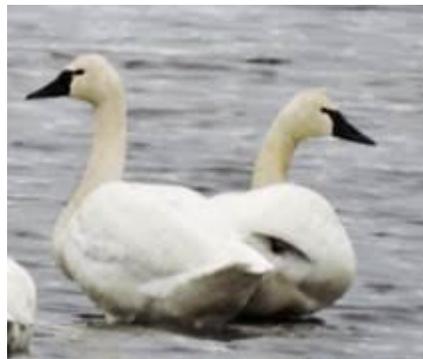


Cottonmouth (John Adair)



White Ibis (by John Adair)

We made it back to the NWR visitor's center where we disembarked and thanked our guide for a great trip. Most of the group headed home but a few of us walked to the beach to see what we could out over the ocean. Red-throated and Common Loons were seen as well as Horned Grebes and Gannets; an American Oystercatcher did a flyby. Two Eastern Phoebe's were working the grass area behind the center. One other point of interest is that on the main road heading to the refuge (Sandpiper Road), there were Eurasian Collared-Doves sitting on the power lines and roof tops. The day turned out to be great and the whole group was well satisfied with what they saw and experienced. Our group of 15 managed an impressive 72 species for the day. A complete list of participants and bird species are on the next page.



Tundra Swans (John Adair)

Participants: Stuart Sweetman, Shawn Dash, Walter and Gwen Harris, Tom Charlock, John, Thomas and Travis Hogan, John and Marilyn Adair, Ellis and Wendy Maxey, Dianne Snyder, Elizabeth Wilkins and Jacques Van Montfrans



At an old sinker (?) for a huge buoy (photo by John Adair)

Species list for Back Bay NWR and False Cape State Park (3/12/16)

Canada Goose	Turkey Vulture	Carolina Chickadee
Mute Swan	Osprey	Tufted Titmouse
Tundra Swan	Bald Eagle	Brown-headed Nuthatch
Gadwall	Northern Harrier	Carolina Wren
American Wigeon	Red-tailed Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet
American Black Duck	American Coot	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Mallard	Killdeer	Eastern Bluebird
Blue-winged Teal	American Oystercatcher	American Robin
Northern Shoveler	Sanderling	Northern Mockingbird
Ring-necked Duck	Ring-billed Gull	Brown Thrasher
Surf Scoter	Herring Gull	European Starling
Bufflehead	Great Black-backed Gull	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Red-breasted Merganser	Royal Turn	Pine Warbler
Red-throated Loon	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Eastern Towhee
Common Loon	Mourning Dove	Field Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Belted Kingfisher	Lark Sparrow
Horned Grebe	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Northern Gannet	Downy Woodpecker	Swamp Sparrow
Brown Pelican	Northern Flicker	White-throated Sparrow
Double-crested Cormorant	Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Great Blue Heron	Eastern Phoebe	Red-winged Blackbird
Great Egret	Blue Jay	Eastern Meadowlark
White Ibis	American Crow	Common Grackle
Glossy Ibis	Tree Swallow	House Sparrow

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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: **John Adair, 109 Nansemond Turn, Yorktown, Virginia 23693**. 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 Glendale Shopping Center in Newport News, or at Wild Birds on Kiln Creek Parkway in Yorktown. 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.

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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