Hampton Roads Bird Club  
General Meeting Minutes  
Date: Thursday, September 14, 2023

1. The meeting was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and called to order at 7:07 p.m. There were approximately 20 attendees.
2. New members/visitors: Genevieve “Jenna” Cruz and Tina White attended as new members.
3. Bird Sightings: Wendy Maxey reported 5 Baltimore Orioles in her yard. American Flamingo reported at Pea Island. Mark Sopko reported a White Pelican. Pectoral Sandpiper and Semipalmated Sandpiper were seen.
4. ID Challenge: Short Billed Dowitcher was an ID challenge. Shawn pointed out that Ospreys are more successful fishing at low wind speeds (guess waves make it harder to see fish). Many birds, including the Barred Owl, eat the Spotted Lantern Fly.
5. Reports:
   1. Membership: Gwen Harris said that she is now able to convey all material to new members using email.
   2. Hospitality: Jane Frigo thanked Charm Peterman for supplying snacks (along with herself) for the evening. She had others sign up for subsequent meetings; list is not complete.
   3. Website: Ellis posted a new picture from Dianne Sawyer on the home page.
   4. Newsletter inputs need on the 25th of August, October, December, February, and April.
   5. Field trips. Shawn called attention to an event at the Mariner’s Museum on November 4, 2023. The HRBC effort for the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, led by Bill, will be on December 16, 2023.
6. Annual Budget: John Adair summarized the budget. This year’s expenses were $1,875. VBBA/VSO was $300. Question of what to do with Education Fund ($500) as the student has graduated. Mark Sopko said speakers now expect $200 and he suggests 3 of them for the year. Much of our $8,000+ horde was collected long ago via contributions from other groups who were thus supporting the Bluebird Trail. Mark Sopko moved for a vote on the budget; motion seconded; approval was unanimous.
7. Discussion of Bluebird Trail and decision on it. There are 106 boxes, many in a poor state. Weekly tending from April to August, which takes about 3 hours by an experienced party servicing boxes that are in good shape, is needed. David Singletary explained the limitations of working with Boy Scouts to possibly repair and/or subsequently service the boxes. Shawn said we should decide on this issue now. A vote was taken on using our funds to repair the boxes and have club volunteers service them; 13 volunteered with Ellis Maxey as leader, assisted by C.L. Tanner; there would be workshops and training sessions; this was unanimously approved.
8. Presentation. Mark Sopko gave a detailed (and well-received) talk about his Galapagos Adventure, 25FEB-4MAR 2023, 16 passengers (8 crew) on a small catamaran cruise boat. 97% of the Galapagos is a national park; tourism is the main industry; population is 33K; 79K visitors per year. Animals there are astoundingly friendly; Mark showed his own video of mating Blue-footed Boobies. There are 56 bird species, 45 of which are endemic. Mark observed 47, including American Oystercatcher, American Flamingo, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Yellow Warbler, and Ruddy Turnstone.
9. Meeting was adjourned (time not recorded).

Submitted by: Tom Charlock on behalf of William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club

General Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, October 12, 2023

1. The October meeting of the Hampton Roads Bird Club was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and called to order at 7 PM by James Abbott (both the President and Vice President were absent). 18 members were present. No visitors were present.

2. Bird sightings for the evening included Flamingo’s, Swamp Sparrows and Ruddy Duck in breeding plumage.

3. The Bingo Roadside Game was presented and members voiced interest in playing.

4. Bird identification activity was conducted and Raven/Crow species discussed. Ravens have been observed more frequently in this area.

5. Reminders were made to send photo contest submissions to Mike Meyer and any newsletter submissions to Tom Charlock by October 25 for inclusions in the November/December issue of the newsletter.

6. There will be a Big Day of Birding on Saturday, October 28, 2023. Species lists may be sent to Dave Youker at youkerd@aol.com

7. A big thanks was given to Ellis and Wendy Maxey and CL Tanner for surveying the Bluebird boxes at the Deer Run Golf courses and making recommendations for box repair and replacement. Dave Singletary spoke about the plans for the Boy Scouts to make replacement boxes on October 21, 2023. Box designs were discussed and a final decision on requirements will be made. Several club members will help with the Boy Scouts at Cannon on October 21, 2023 when the Boy Scouts will finally construct several boxes for use on the trail.

8. Next month’s field trip will be to Grandview.

9. James Abbott presented a very interesting program on his trip to New Zealand and the uniqueness of their bird population.

10. The meeting was concluded at 8:45 PM.

Submitted by Jane Frigo, filling in for the Secretary, who was absent.

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club  
General Meeting Minutes  
Date: Thursday, November 9, 2023

1. The meeting was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and called to order at 7:03 p.m. There were 25 attendees.
2. New members/visitors: 1 new member was in attendance.
3. Bird Sightings: Dave Youker reported observing an American Bittern and a Rough-legged Hawk on Craney Island. James Abbot reported seeing Common Loons, Buffleheads, and Ruddy Ducks in the area. Other member-reported species included Tri-colored Heron and Tree Swallows. Mark Sopko spotted banded Royal Terns on Bethel Beach. Mark was able to photograph the bird, read the tag, and report its location to the US Geological Survey. He was also able to view the birds’ history; one bird was banded on the HRBT, but has been seen on Palm Beach County. If you can read a band, please report via the USGS website, as this supports the development of effective bird science, management, and conservation!
4. ID Challenge: “Turkey-time trivia” was presented by Shawn Dash. Various facts about the Turkeys and others in the Phasianidae family were presented.
5. Reports:
   1. President: Nothing new to report.
   2. Membership: One new member in attendance.
   3. Hospitality: Thanked those who brought snacks. Announced that the annual Holiday Party potluck dinner will be December 14th. Please sign up to bring Holiday Party food and/or future meeting snacks by contacting Jane Frigo.
   4. Publicity: Vacant
   5. Website: No report.
   6. Treasurer: No report.
   7. Field Trips: Grandview for 11 November. Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel south island trip possible for Saturday, January 13 if there's enough interest; approximate $10 fee required; limited to 15 people. Contact James Abbott if interested.
   8. Newsletter: 1 error-picture of the Common Sandpiper was misidentified—it is actually a Spotted Sandpiper. Thanks to all contributors! Deadline for next newsletter is BEFORE Christmas.
6. Open Discussion:
   1. Dave Youker provided a summary of the Big Birding Day held on Saturday, 28 October: 14 members participated, 83 species observed. The three most commonly seen species were Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, and Blue Jay.
   2. Bluebird trail update: Ellis Maxey reported that David Singletary has been able to arrange to procure the materials for 25 boxes at no cost to the club. However, we still need someone to assemble the boxes. If you know of any resources, or would like to volunteer, contact Ellis.
   3. Bill Boeh reminded all about the Christmas Bird Club, and encouraged all to consider participating.
7. Speaker’s Notes: “Adapting on the Wing: Managing a Coastal Urban Seabird Colony” by Becky Gwynn (DWR). Becky related the story of the relocation of the shorebird colony from the HRBT South Island to Fort Wool in 2019, as well as future plans for the colony’s final location.
8. The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club  
General Meeting Minutes  
Date: Thursday, December 14, 2023

1. The club held its annual holiday gathering (in lieu of a normal meeting) at Sandy Bottom Nature Park. There were 28 attendees. As this was a purely social gathering, no officer or committee chair reports were provided nor was any business conducted or speaker presentation provided.
2. . The President was unable to attend, so the Vice President presided over the gathering. Attending members generously provided appetizers, hors d'oeuvres, main dishes, side dishes or salads, and desserts to round out a fine holiday meal. Social time was held between 6:30 and 7:00 p.m., followed by dinner. The gathering adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club

General Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, January 11, 2024

1. The meeting was held via Zoom and called to order at 7:03 p.m. There were 21 attendees.

2. New members/visitors: None

3. Bird Sightings: Dianne Sawyer photographed a Dovekie at Rudee Inlet; Shawn showed Bird Buddy photos from his feeder. Bill Boeh had a Baltimore Oriole at his feeder. Mark Sopko observed White Pelicans in Mathews County during the Christmas Bird Count on December 30. They have been spotted around the county; Mark was not sure if they are the same flock that resides at Hog Island.

4. ID Challenge: Purple Sandpiper

5. Reports:

a. President: Thanked the Ellis’s for maintaining the website.

b. Newsletter: Tom thanked all those who contributed to the current edition.

c. Membership: No report

d. Hospitality: Not present; Dianne Sawyer advised that the Hospitality chair needs 2 more people to sign up to bring snacks for the February meeting. Sign up by contacting Jane Frigo.

e. Publicity: Vacant

f. Website: Nothing significant to report.

g. Treasurer: No report.

h. Field Trips: James Abbott discussed the CBBT Islands and Back Bay Tram field trips. Both trips are at full capacity. Details are in the newsletter and James’ emails to attendees. Wendy Maxey offered that anyone may stay at their house in Sandbridge during the Back Bay trip; contact the Ellis’s if you would like to take them up on the offer.

6. Open Discussion:

a. Shawn discussed the annual Winter Newport News Park Winter Bird Count, January 27, 2024, starting at 7:00 a.m. See President’s email and newsletter for details. More members are needed to participate; to volunteer contact Jane Frigo.

b. Great Backyard Bird Count: Bill Boeh reminded all that the annual Great Backyard Bird Count will take place February 16–19.

c. Winter Waterfowl Count on the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula: Mark Sopko advised that there will be a Winter Waterfowl Count on the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula from 3-4 Feb. If you’d like to volunteer the POC for the count is Jeff Wright (pec11908@mac.com).

d. Newport News Park Bluebird Trail:

i. Ellis Maxey displayed 1 of 25 newly built bluebird houses for the trail. The Maxey’s need help putting 2nd coat of paint on and installing the new boxes, as well as repairing other boxes.

ii. Ellis would like to determine which system to use for trail monitoring/data gathering and some help with training on the selected system. Contact Ellis if you have recommendations for a monitoring system.

iii. Pete Peterman recommended adding Noel guards to all the new boxes to reduce predation by snakes; Ellis indicated that he does intend to install the guards, but can use help with that as well.

iv. Ellis will send an email out to set up workdays to accomplish these tasks. He intends to set up a bluebird trail section on the club web page.

7. Speaker’s Notes: “Birds of Australia and Papua New Guinea” by Pete Peterman. Pete provided a review of his trip, conducted by Field Guides tours in the fall of 2023 (Pete highly recommends the Field Guides tour company; he has taken multiple trips with them and has always been satisfied with their service). It took Pete three years to complete this tour after delays incurred by COVID and tribal warfare on New Guinea. Pete’s focus was birds of paradise, bowerbirds, and fairy-wrens. Pete got to see all three of his target genus’s.

8. The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President



Hampton Roads Bird Club

General Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, February 8, 2024

1. The meeting was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and via Zoom and called to order at 7:07 p.m. There were 17 attendees.

2. New members/visitors: none.

3. Bird Sightings: Gwen Harris reported an Orange-crowned Warbler; Todd Trousdell saw Scrub Jays, Frigate Bird, and Northern Harriers on a recent trip to Florida. Shawn showed images from his Bird Buddy. He reported that he's had House Finches with Mycoplasmal conjunctivitis (House Finch eye disease) showing up at his feeders, and reminded all to clean and take down their feeders if they see diseased birds.

4. ID Challenge: In honor of Valentine’s-Day, Shawn featured birds exhibiting mating behaviors, including the White Stork; Greater Prairie Chicken; Sandhill Crane; and Superb Bird of Paradise.

5. Reports:

a. Membership: Nothing to report.

b. Hospitality: Thanked those who brought snacks. Need volunteers for April/May.

c. Newsletter: Not present; President reminded all to send newsletter input by February 25th.

d. Publicity: Vacant

e. Website: Not present.

f. Treasurer: Not present.

g. Field Trips: Back Bay February 10; 1 open spot. $8.00 per person. Contact James Abbot if you would like to go.

6. Open Discussion:

a. President reminded all regarding the Great Backyard Bird Count, 16-19 February.

b. Spring Bird Count: Bill Boeh announced the date for the will be May 4.

c. Bluebird trail: Bill & Ellis worked on the trail over the past week. Still some repairs and replacements to do, birds will be showing up soon. Could use volunteers to help with monitoring. For now focus will be on one of the two courses (Cardinal Course); as capacity expands, we can add the other course (Deer Run).

7. Speaker’s Notes: “Winter Waterfowl and (Water Birds) Workshop” by Jeff Wright. Jeff is President of Dragon Run, leads other organizations and actively supports bird and other wildlife conservation activities in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. His presentation covered the winter waterfowl that are present in our region during the winter, providing pointers on identifying these visitors. Jeff runs an annual Winter Waterfowl Count on the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck; he would like to extend the count south to the Virginia Peninsula region.

8. The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President

Hampton Roads Bird Club  
General Meeting Minutes  
Date: Thursday, March 14, 2024A bird in a circle

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1. The meeting was held at Sandy Bottom Nature Park and called to order at 7:00 p.m. There were 23 attendees. Due to the absence of both the President and Vice President, Marc Nichols chaired the meeting.
2. New members/visitors: none
3. Bird Sightings: Marc Nichols is seeing Eared Grebe, Common Eider, and Razorbills at Ft. Monroe; Dianne Sawyer saw a Clay-colored Sparrow at the Harris Teeter in Virginia Beach; Ryan Walsh has been seeing a young Bald Eagle nearly ready to fledge near his office.
4. ID Challenge: Challenges included Sora Rail; Long-tailed Duck; Harlequin Duck; Common Eider.
5. Reports:
   1. President: Marc reminded all that club dues are due.
   2. Membership: Reported we’d gotten 5 new members since January.
   3. Newsletter: Tom appreciated the good pictures from multiple members, see newsletter. He also thanked contributors for their articles.
   4. Hospitality: Jane thanked those who brought snacks, and reported that she needs additional volunteer for both April and May. The June picnic will be June 8th; it will be just a pot luck (no grilling).
   5. Publicity: Vacan
   6. Website: Not present.
   7. Treasurer: No report
   8. Field Trips: Hog Island: 3 spots left; wide open for Great Dismal Swamp in April. See James’ emails for details.
6. Open Discussion:
   1. Jane Frigo will be away, so Stuart Sweetman will lead the park walk the first Sunday in April.
   2. Bill Boeh gave update on the NNGC Bluebird Trail, and reminded all that the Spring Bird Count will be May 4th.
7. Speaker’s Notes: “Texas Birding” by Marc Nichols. Marc provided a review of the birds and animals he observed during his 2022 trip to multiple locations in Texas. Marc observed 172 species during the trip.
8. The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Submitted by: William Boeh, Secretary

Approved by: Dr. Shawn Dash, President