



Bird Notes

Newsletter of the

Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC)

www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org and on Facebook

Vol. 67, No. 5

May/June 2019

May 9 Meeting
6:30 PM Social 7:00 PM Program
at Sandy Bottom Nature Park

The Birds of Central Virginia
By Marshall Faintich

Dr. Marshall Faintich is an astronomer by training, a cartographer by trade, and a student of ornithology, numismatics, archaeology, and history. Marshall received his BS in Applied Mathematics from the University of Missouri at Rolla, and his MS and PhD in Astronomy from the University of Illinois. He is the author of "A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Wintergreen" and a past manager of birding activities for the Rockfish Valley Trail. His web site contains more than 8,000 of his wildlife photos and gets about 3 million hits per year.

This hour-long presentation has some of his best pictures and highlights 150 of the more than 350 species that can be seen in central Virginia.

Hosted by Susan and Lee Morris, Wendy and Ellis Maxey, and Phyllis Roth



House sparrows (by Marshall Faintich)

June 8 Annual Picnic
Noon Meal
at the Parker Pavilion,
Sandy Bottom Nature Park

By Jane Frigo

We will be meeting again this year at Sandy Bottom Nature Park in Hampton for our end of the year picnic. We have reserved the Parker Pavilion, which is located closest to the canoe launch, for Saturday, June 8. Lunch will be served at noon. As in previous years, the club will provide paper products and hamburgers and hot dogs. Members are asked to bring something to share (an appetizer, side dish, or dessert). We are seeking a volunteer to bring soft drinks and ice. If you wish, you can bring a lawn chair to be more comfortable. There will be a sign-up sheet at the May 9 meeting. Also, those coming will need to indicate the number in their party and their preferences for hot dogs or hamburgers. If you are unable to attend the May 9 meeting and still plan to attend the picnic, please call or email Jane Frigo (757-873-0721 or birderjane@gmail.com) by June 1, so we will know how many to expect and what to buy. Lastly, anyone willing to help with planning, set up, cooking or clean up can also sign up at the meeting or call Jane. One additional change, there is no scheduled bird walk before the picnic. You can sleep in, fix your favorite dish and just come to eat and socialize! Thanks ahead of time to everyone who has helped make the Hampton Roads Bird Club a success.



Northern cardinal with chick in York County on April 20 (by Marilyn Adair)

Field Trip to Hog Island Saturday, 7:00 AM, May 11, 2019

By Jason Strickland

We'll meet at Huntington Beach Park (in the lot closest to the James River Bridge), Newport News, 6:00 AM to car pool or caravan to Hog Island, arriving at about 7:00 AM. The huge American white pelican is often at Hog Island during early May. A \$50 entrance fee will cover the entire group, and the cost will be split between the participants. **Bring photo identification.** You will need it to pass the security checkpoint of the Surry nuclear power plant. We will hike a few miles, mostly on a flat, dirt road with little shade. Some water, a snack, a hat and bug repellent would be welcome. Contact Jason Strickland for questions at 757-739-6939 or jmstrickland228@gmail.com

HRBC Outdoors May-June

Regular bird walks in Newport News Park

First and third Sundays each month 7:00 AM.
Meet at big parking lot behind Ranger Station.
Leader: Jane Frigo
757-873-0721 or birderjane@gmail.com

Field Trip to Hog Island (see this page below)

Saturday, 7:00 AM, May 11, 2019
Leader: Jason Strickland
757-739-6939 or jmstrickland228@gmail.com

Lion's Bridge bird walks at 7:00 AM on "last" Sundays, May 26 and June 30, 2019

Meet at the west end of Lion's Bridge, Museum Drive, Newport News
Contact: Shawn Dash
915-491-6277 or drshawntdash@gmail.com

Annual Picnic at Sandy Bottom (see page 1)

Saturday, noon meal, June 8, 2019 at Parker Pavilion of Sandy Bottom Nature Park in Hampton
Leader: Jane Frigo
757-873-0721 or birderjane@gmail.com



Hog Island (by Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries)

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries notes that <https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/vbwt/sites/hog-island-wildlife-management-area/> "Hog Island is actually a 3,908-acre peninsula that juts into the brackish waters of the James River, creating a mosaic of tidewater habitats that include marsh, tidal channels, swamp, and beach. Agricultural fields and loblolly pine forests surround freshwater sources such as Lawnes Neck and Lower Chippokes Creek. This diversity of habitats, including the large shallow impoundments of Fishhouse Bay and Homewood Creek, attract a vast number of birds, and an exploration of the area will

produce a large number of species at any time of the year. Birding the area effectively requires leaving the main road and striking off on foot along the trails that separate the peninsula's major impoundments. Over 30 species of waterfowl and 35 species of shorebirds have been recorded at Hog Island, largely from the wetlands at the northern end of the peninsula. Birding the Carlisle Tract, south of the power plants, gives access to upland communities absent further north." HRBC usually visits the north section.

HRBC Office Board Elections Coming up at May 9 Meeting

By Shawn Dash

We are excited to provide a list of the persons running for officer and board positions for the 2019-2020 year (2019-2022 for Barb Abraham).

We still need someone to self-nominate or to nominate someone for the Publicity position. Please send your nomination. Publicity covers the HRBC Facebook page.

President - Dr. Shawn T. Dash
Vice President - Pete Peterman
Secretary - Bill Boeh
Treasurer - John Adair
Board Member (2018-2021) - Brian Magill
Board Member (2019-2022) – Barb Abraham
Board Member (2017-20) - Walter Harris
Newsletter Editor - Tom Charlock
Website Editors - Ellis and Wendy Maxey
Field Trip Coordinators - Jason Strickland
Hospitality - Jane Frigo and Dianne Snyder
Publicity - ???????
Membership - Gwen Harris
We will vote at the May 9 meeting with installation at the June 8 picnic.



Carolina chickadees who just made it into the HRBC Spring Bird Count led by Bill Boeh on April 27.

Report of Field Trip to Grandview Beach on 3/9/2019

Jason Strickland is one of the top birders in the state, but he, Ellis Maxey, Sue Tomina, Paula Markham, Lori Palagyi, and Tom Charlock drew the card of challenging weather on their March 9 field trip to Grandview Beach. While the hourly reports from Langley Air Force Base had no wind above 12 mph or temperature below 40 F, the northeasterly blast right at the bay was surely above 25 mph at times, giving wind chills in the high 20s F. Headcover and hand warmers were shared as all eagerly huddled around an effusive, telescope hefting leader as he poured out bird lore. Marching 3 miles to Factory Point beneath a gray overcast, we were rewarded with best ever, close views of a pair of American Oystercatchers. They patiently posed on the Back River beach of the spit. A Hampton Police Department boat there paid slight attention to us.



Sue Tomina, Ellis Maxey, Jason Strickland, and Lori Palagyi near Factory Point. Paula Markham's footwear can be discerned above Ellis's right boot. On this bay side, the placement of 4 ripraps has led to the formation of scythe-like swathes in the beach, each with a width of about 250 m.

Jason's eBird list of 37 species for Grandview on March 9, 2019 follows.

Canada Goose	2
Wood Duck	4
Gadwall	6
Mallard	3
Green-winged Teal	2
Greater Scaup	1
Surf Scoter	17
Long-tailed Duck	1
Bufflehead	15
Hooded Merganser	3
Horned Grebe	6
Mourning Dove	2
American Oystercatcher	3
Sanderling	35
Dunlin	15

Greater Yellowlegs	5
Ring-billed Gull	15
Herring Gull	5
Great Black-backed Gull	5
Red-throated Loon	5
Common Loon	6
Double-crested Cormorant	7
Brown Pelican	2
Great Blue Heron	1
Northern Harrier	1
Bald Eagle	3
Downy Woodpecker	1
Blue Jay	1
Carolina Wren	2
American Robin	3
Brown Thrasher	1
Northern Mockingbird	2
Savannah Sparrow (Savannah)	1
Savannah Sparrow (Ipswich)	3
Song Sparrow	2
Red-winged Blackbird	2
Yellow-rumped Warbler	6
Northern Cardinal	2

Bits of Bird Science

The feelings of those who feed birds

By Jack Daw

People in the US, the UK and Australia enjoy feeding birds. It's generally encouraged here and in Britain. But some science in Australia is advising against it, in part because it fosters the expansion of non-native populations. In Florida it's now illegal to feed scrub-jays (which are endangered) without a permit. The scrub-jays that take handouts reproduce ahead of schedule, yielding young that find their natural food source, caterpillars, too scarce.

There's a new beginning in the sliver of science that looks at the feeding of birds: Avian researchers have begun to investigate us, the emotions and actions of the people providing the food. This stuff is not Freud, Timothy Leary, or Dr. Seuss. Dayer et al. (2019) tracked by objective survey the reported feelings of over a thousand citizen scientists, a willing subset of the long-term participants in Project FeederWatch of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Most of the research team is at Virginia Tech. One idea is that by understanding emotional reactions to various outcomes (i.e., response to increase in disease or predator, decrease in species abundance), more effective guidance can be issued to those who conscientiously feed birds.

About three quarters of survey respondents believed that feeding increased both the number of species and the total population of birds in the vicinity. Dayer et al. (2019) state "Although 62% of the respondents in our study reported observing a potential negative impact of feeding on birds (i.e. a diseased bird in the last year), only 6% believed that their feeding was increasing the prevalence of disease. This suggests a disconnect, where an additional missing feedback loop arises from people observing but not recognizing the potential negative impacts of their feeding."

47% were angry at the presence of a cat near a feeder. 10% regarded the cat's appearance as natural, 19% blamed other people, and 4% blamed themselves. A hawk at a feeder made 7% angry, 29% sad, 2% worried, 2% annoyed, 11% enjoy, 8% interested, and 6% neutral.

Thank you, Virginia Tech. If you go to the web site ScienceDaily.com and enter "birds" in the search box, readable and enthusiastic summary material on Dayer et al. (2019) will come up. Most will find the article itself a bit dry. The annual bill for wild bird food in the US is \$4 billion.

Ashley A. Dayer, Connor Rosenblatt, David N. Bonter, Holly Faulkner, Richard J. Hall, Wesley M. Hochachka, Tina B. Phillips, Dana M. Hawley. Observations at backyard bird feeders influence the emotions and actions of people that feed birds. *People and Nature*, 2019; DOI: [10.1002/pan3.17](https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.17)



Hermit thrush in Newport News Park on 24 March
(by Dianne Snyder)

President	Shawn Dash	drshawntdash@gmail.com	915-471-1287
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Board: (7/17-6/20)	Walter Harris	walterandgwenharris@cox.net	757-898-8649
Board: (7/18-6/21)	Brian Magill	b.e.magill157@netzero.com	757-810-2435
Board: (7/19-6/22)	Barbara Abraham	araknophyl@cox.net	757-244-0767
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Hospitality	Dianne Snyder	dianne5657@cox.net	757-872-6747
Newsletter Editor	Thomas Charlock	TomCharlock@gmail.com	757-599-3418
Publicity	?????????????	<i>Please consider to volunteer for this position</i>	
Membership	Gwen Harris	walterandgwenharris@cox.net	757-898-8649

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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