



THE NATURALIST

*The monthly newsletter of the Historic Rivers Chapter
Virginia Master Naturalist Program*

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 No. 1 January 2010

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Message from the president

Job Well Done!!

At the end of every year, each Master Naturalist Chapter is tasked with completing an "Annual Report;" a document that summarizes the work that we have done as a chapter. Michelle Prysby, our state coordinator, compiles these reports into one big annual report for the program, which is then submitted to the sponsoring state agencies as well as federal agencies. This information highlights the impacts of the Master Naturalist program across the state, and -per Michelle Prysby - helps each agency understand that the program is a "cost-effective strategy for accomplishing natural resource education, citizen science, and stewardship."

I thought you might be interested in the information our chapter submitted for 2009.

Our chapter took full advantage of all the advanced training opportunities available. We logged a total of 2,759 hours of advanced training hours. Whew, we are a well-trained group of people!

As for volunteer service projects, we volunteered 436 hours on education/outreach related projects; 706 hours on citizen science projects; and 510.25 hours on steward-

ship projects. The total number of hours volunteered for education, citizen science, and stewardship was 2812.5. Of course, with so many projects and advanced training opportunities, we logged a great deal of admin time - 1160.25 hours.

What is interesting is to figure out what this means in terms of cost-effectiveness for the state. According to the Office on Volunteerism and Community Service, the 2008 Virginia average hourly value of volunteer time is \$20.53. The national average hourly value is slightly less at \$20.25. If you do the math, the monetary value of 2812.50 hours volunteered by our chapter members calculates to be \$57,740.63.

Job well done!!

Thanks so much for all you do!

Happy New Year!

Susan Powell, President

Historic Rivers Chapter

VA Master Naturalist Program

CHAPTER OFFICERS 2009

Susan Powell, President

Shirley Devan, Vice President & Programs Chair

Angier Brock & Katie Schultz, Secretary

Jim Booth, Treasurer

Barbara Boyer, Newsletter Editor

Felice Bond, Historian

Alice Kopinitz, Host

Jeanette Navia, Membership

Bruce Hill, Volunteer Service Projects

Bruce Hill, Training Chair

Susan Engle-Hill, Joanne Medina, Advanced Training

Adrienne Frank & Gary Driscole, Outreach Committee

Seig Kopinitz, Webmaster

Dave Youker, Member-at-Large

Mike Powell, Member-at-Large

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Volunteer Service Projects

Bruce Hill, Chair

Advanced Training

Susie Engle-Hill, Co-Chair

Joanne Medina, Co-Chair

Training Committee

Bruce Hill, Chair

Outreach/Publicity

Adrienne Frank, and Gary Driscole

Upcoming HRC Monthly Programs

January 13, 2010 (Wednesday): "Graceful Forms, Rich Colors: Writing about Nature" by our own Angier Brock who taught writing at VCU. Everyone needs to bring a journal or paper and pen/pencil. Time: 6 – 9 pm. Short business meeting at 6 pm followed by Angier's program at 7 pm.

February 13, 2010 (Saturday): "Lust in the Dust" with Dr. Art Evans, Entomologist. Location is Christopher Newport University, 7 – 9 pm. This is a joint program with the Peninsula Chapter and the Tidewater Chapter of the VA Master Naturalist Program. Stay tuned for more details.

March 10, 2010 (Wednesday): Graduation for Cohort IV and Annual Meeting, 6 – 9 pm at Williamsburg James City County Community Center, 5301 Longhill Road. Speaker will be Dr. Randy Chambers, C.B. Talbot Professor of Biology and Director, Keck Environmental Lab, College of William and Mary. His research focuses on wetlands ecology.

April 14, 2010 (Wednesday): "Sketching Nature" by our own Linda Miller, Volunteer in Cohort IV.

May 12, 2010 (Wednesday): "More about the Chesapeake Bay" by Jill Bieri, Owner, Chesapeake Experience.

250 Hours

Felice Bond

Gary Driscole

Gary Hammer

Sheila Kerr-Jones

Clyde Marsteller

1000 Hours

Shirley Devan

MILESTONES!

CONGRATULATIONS!!

Notes from the Board

All meetings of the Board of Directors are open to members. Jeanette Navia reminds all to turn in their hours for 2009. You can't get certified unless you send in your hours!

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Virginia Master Naturalist programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

Cohort IV Training Schedule

By Shirley Devan

Upcoming Basic Training Events Open to All

The training committee reminds all HRC members that they may attend the basic training classes and earn advanced training hours. Here's the upcoming schedule:

January 9, 2010 (Saturday): Field trip to New Kent Forestry Center, 9 am – 3 pm. Pack a lunch and wear outdoor attire for afternoon nature trail exploration. Address is: 11301 Pocahontas Trail, Providence Forge, VA 23140 (about 30 minutes from Williamsburg)

January 19, 2010 (Tuesday): Ornithology Class with Bill Williams, W&M Center for Conservation Biology and Williamsburg Bird Club, 6 – 9 pm in Multipurpose Room at Human Services Building.

February 2, 2020 (Tuesday): Fishes of Virginia with Bob Greenlee, VA DGIF, 6 – 9 pm in Multipurpose Room at Human Services Building.

February 16, 2010 (Tuesday): Mammalogy with Bo Baker, VA Living Museum, 6 – 9 pm in Multipurpose Room at Human Services Building.

February 20, 2010 (Saturday): Freshwater Biology and Winter Botany with Charlie Dubay and Hugh Beard, 9 am – 4 pm, at Jamestown High School. Winter botany will be an outdoor field walk.

March 2, 2010 (Tuesday): Ecological Concepts with Dr. Lou Verner, VA DGIF, 6 – 9 pm in Multipurpose Room at Human Services Building.

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If you have questions, contact Shirley Devan (sedevan52@cox.net) or Bruce Hill (euplotes@msn.com). Hope to see you in class.

Nature Camp 2010 Scholarship Competition

Both the **Williamsburg Bird Club** and the **John Clayton Native Plant Society** are offering scholarships to **Nature Camp** for 2010.

The **Williamsburg Bird Club** and the **John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society** are now considering candidates for scholarships for Summer 2010 sessions of Nature Camp at Vesuvius, Virginia in the George Washington National Forest.

Nature Camp is a two-week coeducational, academic camp that emphasizes education in natural history and environmental studies for students currently in 5th – 12th grades. It is intended for those with a genuine interest in the natural world. Campers are required to attend class daily, maintain a notebook, complete a written project for each class and participate in outdoor activities. The deadline for submitting application, essay and teacher recommendation is January 15, 2010 for each organization.

For the Native Plant Society application, visit www.claytonvnps.org (click on —Nature Camp Scholarship) or call 757-220-2310.

For the Bird Club application, visit <http://williamsburgbirdclub.org/> (click on "2010 Nature Camp Application" on the bottom of the home page) or call 757-813-1322.

[Note that the application forms are different for the Bird Club and the Native Plant Society.]

HRC Program for January 13.

Have you ever wanted to put some of your experiences with nature into words? Come to the January 13 Historic Rivers Meeting. Bring pencil, and paper, and be prepared to write. Our presenter will be our own, Angier Brock, of Cohort III.



"At VCU Angier taught primarily taught freshman composition (regular and honors), sophomore-level researched writing (regular and honors), and advanced comp. Prior to being fulltime there, she also taught creative writing part-time at the University of Richmond, and also taught small private creative writing classes for many years through an organization called The Chrysalis Group. "

THE VIRGINIA LIVING MUSEUM

January 5, 2010

Behind Locked Doors: The Hidden World Collections

Who knows what lurks behind the doors of the Museum's non-live collections suite? Our own "Queen of the Dead" collections manager will reveal what goes on behind the scenes. Be the first to see some of the specimens recently added to the collections, and discover what we do to preserve the many different materials that make up our non-live natural history collections.

Presented by: Jody Ullmann, VLM Collections Manager

Ages 18+

Time: 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$5 Members; \$7 Non-Members. Active volunteers are free.

February 9, 2010

Animal Tracks and Signs

Have you ever gone for a nature hike and wondered, "Where are all the animals?" Like culprits at a crime scene, animals leave behind signs of their existence and behavior - even if you don't get to see the animals. Come explore North American and African animal signs, make plaster casts and try your hand at a beginner's guide to animal tracks.

Presented by: Lisa Wright, VLM Education Associate

Ages 18+

Time: 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$5 Members; \$7 Non-Members. Active volunteers are free.

Hi Virginia Birders

For those looking for another chance to get good looks at wintering waterfowl and shorebirds in Virginia Beach (and maybe seals and whales!). Virginia Beach Park & Rec will sponsor a Winter Wildlife Festival on January 30th. A variety of trips are planned to all the Virginia Beach hotspots - Back Bay and False Cape (with a combined Terragator and Tram Tour), Fort Story & First landing and The Whitehurst Tract. There will be a chance for some near shore pelagics as well with reduced adult tickets for a Virginia Aquarium Whale Watch. More information and registration information can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/ycf8bjx>.

Stephen Living

Watchable Wildlife Biologist Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries



Members who have reached volunteer milestones: Back left to right: Patty Riddick, Mike Powell, Clyde Marsteller, Susan Powell, Larry Riddick, Gary Hammer, Bruce Hill, Alice Kopinitz, Susan Engle-Hill, Kathi Mestayer, Jim Booth, kneeling left to right, Seig Kopinitz, guest speaker Michelle Prysby, Felice Bond and Shirley Devan Photo courtesy of Tom Bond



Going Green for the Holidays!

Alice Kopinitz and Jim Booth, along with a green friend at the December meeting.

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Upcoming Advanced Training

Date	Title	Location	Time	Remarks/Contact
JANUARY				
1-Jan	WBC New Year's Day Walk	Greensprings Trail	1300-1500	Shirley Devan
3-Jan	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
9-Jan	Forestry field trip	New Kent Forestry Center		Shirley Devan
9-Jan	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0800-1000	Shirley Devan
16-Jan	HRBC Field Trip	CBBT	0800-1200	Dave Youker
16-Jan	Understanding Watersheds	JCWRC, Longhill Rd	1000-1600	
23-Jan	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0800-1000	Shirley Devan
23-Jan	Native Plant Walk	Longhill Swamp	1000-1200	Phillip Merritt
FEBRUARY				
3-Feb	Wonders of Wetlands workshop	Ernie Morgan Ctr, Norfolk	0900-1600	www.wetland.org or call 410-745-9620
5-7 Feb	VSO field trip to the Outer Banks	Outer Banks		http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html#OBX2010
7-Feb	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
13-Feb	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0800-1000	Shirley Devan
13-Feb	HRBC Field Trip	Mathews County	0800-1200	Dave Youker
13-Feb	Lust in the Dust (Art Evans speaking)	CNU campus	1900-2100	
21-Feb	HRBC Walk	Newport News Park	0700-1000	Jane Frigo
27-Feb	WBC Walk	New Qtr Park	0800-1000	Shirley Devan



Winter Hours

Friday, 10 a.m. to Dusk

Saturday & Sunday, 8 a.m. to Dusk

January

9 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

23 - Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.



February

6 - Walk & Talk with J. Michael Moore, Curator of Lee Hall Mansion. Learn about the Civil War Battle of Williamsburg

13 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

27 - Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.



March

6 - Walk & Talk with Dave Ruble of the Virginia DEQ. Learn about our Environmental Footprint.

6 - Bark for Life - Celebrate the care-giving qualities of canines at this American Cancer Society Relay for Life event. To register, contact Robin Sulanowski at rsulanowski@aol.com.

13 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

27 - Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.

Shelter & Fire Circle Reservations: \$50 & \$25; Call 890-3513
Disc Golf: Daily \$3, Annual \$25; Sales & Rentals

Directions

- Exit Col Pkwy at Queen's Lake, turn right. Turn on Lakeshead Dr. (Look for sign.)
- From Peninsula: Exit I-64 at Rt. 199 toward Jamestown. Exit Rt. 143W. Right on Peniman Rd., left on Hubbard Ln. Right on Lakeshead Rd., follow to Park.



Upcoming Events

April

3 - Colonial Road Runners Fun Run/Walk and 5K

3 - Walk & Talk: Rusty Blackbird Research & Spring Migration, Andy McGann, William & Mary Biology Dept Graduate Student

4 - Easter Sunrise Service at the Fire Circle

10 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

24 - Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.

24 - Bark in the Park, Heritage Humane Society

May

1 - British Long Bow Tournament, North American Chapter of the British Long Bow Society

8 - Walk & Talk: York County Geology, Jerri Johnson, William & Mary Geology Professor Emeritus. LIMIT 18. Call 890-5840 to reserve a space beginning March 3 at 8:30 a.m.

8 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

22 - Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.

June

5 - Walk & Talk: Diamond-backed Terrapins, Randy Chambers, William & Mary Keck Environmental Lab Director

12 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

26 - Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.

July

10 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

24 - Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.

August

7 - Walk & Talk: Butterflies, Barb Dunbar, Virginia Master Gardener & Naturalist

14 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

28 - Bird Walk, 7-9 a.m.

September

4 - Walk & Talk: Foraging for Pawpaws, Vickie Shuffer, Edible Wild Foods Expert & Author

11 - Bird Walk, 8-10 a.m.

More Information at: www.meetup.com/NewQuarterPark & www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec
New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., 757-890-5840 (Friday-Sunday) . York Co Parks & Rec, 757-890-3500 (Monday-Friday)

Please find the registration form for our upcoming **4-H Natural Resources Weekend** below. The event will be held on **January 23-24th, 2010 at Holiday Lake 4-H Center** (www.holidaylake4h.com). The cost is \$50.00 per person and youth ages 9-19 are invited to attend with an adult. The center is equipped with winter accommodations and lodging will be provided for female and male participants in separate quarters.

Activities include classes for youth and adults related to GPS, wildlife, trees, hiking, insects, arts and crafts, and we will have both the Wildlife Center of Virginia and a falconer do demonstrations. It should be tons of fun!

If you would like to attend please complete the attached registration form and Health History form (for **both** youth and adults) and send it to:

**VCE - Bath
P.O. Box 357
Warm Springs, VA 24484**

First come, first served!

Checks should be made payable to the **Virginia 4-H Foundation – Natural Resources Weekend**. Assistance may be available for those in need.

Questions should go to

Doug Harpole

Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development

Fauquier County

Virginia Cooperative Extension

24 Pelham Street

Warrenton, VA 20186

540.341.7950

dharpole@vt.edu

Registration Form

PLEASE COMPLETE A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH PARTICIPANT

This form must be completed and accompanied by a check for \$50.00 per person, and a completed and signed 4-H Health Form 388-906 available from your local Extension Office or <http://www.4-h.ext.vt.edu/forms/index.html>

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____

County: _____

Male: _____ Female: _____ Age: _____

If under 18, who will be providing supervision? _____

Email: _____

Day Phone: (____) _____

If you are disabled and require assistive services or special accommodations please contact the Fauquier County Extension Office by January 5, 2010 at 540/341-7950



Make checks payable to:
Virginia 4-H Foundation – Natural Resources Weekend

Mail all registration information to:

VCE - Bath
P.O. Box 357
Warm Springs, VA 24484

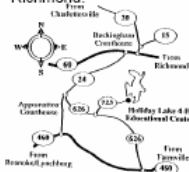
Registration Deadline:
January 8, 2010

Directions to Holiday Lake 4-H Center

From Richmond:
Rt. 60 West through Buckingham, past the courthouse. Left onto Rt. 24 East toward Appomattox. Travel approximately 10 miles, turn left onto Rt. 626. Drive 5 miles on Rt. 626 then turn Left on Rt. 723. The Camp is at the end of Rt. 723.

From Lynchburg/Roanoke:
Rt. 460 East toward Appomattox. Turn left onto Rt. 24 East Toward Appomattox Courthouse. Travel 7 miles, turn right onto Rt. 626. Drive 5 miles then turn left onto Rt. 723. The camp is at the end of Rt. 723.

From Charlottesville:
Rt. 20 to Rt. 15 South. Drive 1 mile to Rt. 60 West and follow the directions from Richmond.



VIRGINIA 4-H NATURAL RESOURCES WEEKEND



FOR 4-H MEMBERS
AGES 9-19 AND 4-H
VOLUNTEERS

SATURDAY – SUNDAY
JAN 23 – JAN 24, 2010

HOLIDAY LAKE 4-H
CENTER
APPOMATTOX, VA

More tips from Seafood Watch by Patty Riddick

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch defines their ratings as follows:

Best Choices: Seafood in this category is abundant, well-managed and caught or farmed in environmentally friendly ways.

Good Alternatives: These items are an option, but there are concerns with how they're caught or farmed-or with the health of their habitat due to other human impacts.

Avoid: Take a pass on these items for now. They are caught or farmed in ways that harm other marine life or the environment.



Salmon

Seafood Watch recommend all species of wild-caught salmon as ocean-friendly alternatives to farmed Atlantic salmon. Salmon farms impact the environment in numerous ways – pollution, chemicals, parasites and non-native farmed fish that escape from salmon farms all affect the natural habitat and the native salmon in the surrounding areas.

SEAFOOD	RATING	MARKET NAMES	WHERE CAUGHT	HOW CAUGHT
Salmon	BEST CHOICE	Coho, Sockeye, King, Pink, Red, Sake	Alaska	Wild-caught
Salmon	GOOD ALTERNATIVE	Coho, Sockeye, King, Pink, Red, Sake	Washington	Wild-caught
Salmon	AVOID	Farmed Salmon, Atlantic Salmon, Sake	Worldwide	Farmed

MONARCHS IN SPACE

By Pam Camblin



Want to get students interested in nature and taking care of butterflies? NASA and Monarch Watch successfully launched student interest with the Monarchs in Space program in November and December of 2009. I should tell you that I teach Third Grade at Poquoson Elementary School and love to teach students about Monarchs and other butterflies.

In November, I received an e-mail from Monarch Watch stating that they would allow the first 22 respondents to participate in the Monarchs in Space with NASA. All we needed to do was purchase a raising chamber, Monarch caterpillars, and food from Monarch Watch. They had such an overwhelming response that they didn't have enough caterpillars for everyone who wanted to participate. Three Monarch caterpillars were being sent into space in the Space Shuttle Atlantis on STS 129 to see the effects of space on Monarch Caterpillars and to get students interested in Monarchs.

Monarch Watch is an organization based out of the University of Kansas which is best known for tagging and monitoring Monarch Migration. Dr. Chip Taylor, professor of Entomology, started the organization in 1992. The goal was to promote the help citizen scientists in following the migration patterns of Monarchs. When I went home to Kansas two years ago to visit my family, I persuaded two of my sorority sisters to go with me to visit Monarch Watch headquarters on the campus of our alma mater. It is a very small operation with only 1-4 paid staff members. It was a hot, steamy Kansas day when we viewed the butterfly garden which was designed and maintained by a Master Gardener. We were impressed by the sincerity and dedication of the individual who took us on a tour. <http://www.monarchwatch.com/>

Back to November 2009. I ordered my caterpillars and equipment and was even allowed to purchase two more batches of caterpillars to share with other classes at my grade level. However, I was going to have to make the

raising chambers for these. My class anxiously awaited the arrival of our caterpillars the next week. The e-mail had asked if school would be open daily the next week so someone would be there for the arrival of the live creatures. Well, that was the week that we had a Nor'easter, Poquoson was flooded, and my school was closed for two days! I called Monarch Watch and the caterpillars were delivered to my home instead of the school.

We had our Monarch caterpillars in their chamber with food on November 16, 2009 when flight STS 129 launched from Cape Kennedy. We watched the flight on line in our classroom. We were also excited because NASA Langley is outside our town and several students have relatives that work for NASA. One of my student's mothers even got us decals from the NASA flight. She said that the Langley group was excited because one of the astronauts was a local man.

My class documented the life cycle of our caterpillars from Nov. 16-December 22. . Incidentally, not all of our caterpillars survived. We lost one the first few days. Then only 2 of the original 3 butterflies emerged. All of the butterflies emerged on the Space Shuttle experiment.

FYI-it was too late for the butterflies to migrate. We were told that they were not in a migrating bunch. Also, there wasn't any milkweed available at the time.

Our technology people at school got really involved in this project. They set up a web cam in my class to document the life cycle of the Monarch. It was a challenge some days because the students loved to pick up the chambers and look at the caterpillars or butterflies and didn't put them back in the right place. A group of students had their photos taken for the Daily Press and school newsletter.

It really helped that I had raised both Monarch and Black Swallowtail butterflies in my garden and had brought

them into the classroom for several years. The members of the Virginia Butterfly Society, especially Ruth Birch, have been very helpful in doing programs at my school and helping me personally raise butterflies. The meetings are at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens so it is a long way for the Williamsburg members. However, they have some very interesting programs. In October, Judy Molinar, discussed her trip to Mexico to see the Over-wintering sites.

Submitted by Pam Camblin



In conclusion, this was a very successful project. Everyone was so excited about the Space Shuttle mission and taking care of the Monarchs. If you would like more information about this project you can check it out at: <http://www.monarchwatch.org/space/>

From the October 2009 issue of "Bird Calls" produced by American Bird Conservancy, page 22: "A new FWS report shows birdwatchers contributed \$36 billion to the U.S. economy in 2006. The report, "Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis," shows that total participation in birdwatching is strong at 48 million (nearly twice the number of people who play golf in the United States, according to the National Golf Foundation), and has remained at a steady 20% of the U.S. population since 1996."

My question is: why are we not letting nature take over golf courses?

Shirley Devan

Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council

By Kathi Mestayer

In December, I attended the conference of the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council (CCLC) at George Washington University. One of the most interesting presentations was on the Sustainable Sites Initiative.

The Sustainable Sites Initiative has made major progress by developing standards for site selection, development and O&M, which are being incorporated into the LEED standards (!). This will take a few months, due to the Green Building Council's process, but it constitutes major progress. The presenter was the CEO of the American Society of Landscape Architects (Nancy Somerville) and they are a Founding Partner of this effort. The parts I got a look at during her talk encourage native plantings and site-appropriate plantings, and require removal of nonnative invasives. Two documents are attached:

1. The "Making a Case for Sustainable Landscaping", which talk about ecosystem services and how their approach is based on that concept, and
2. The "Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks 2009". Look under "Site Design: Soils and Vegetation."

They are currently looking for pilot projects, and will be through Feb 15, 2010. They want projects in every stage of development, not just shovel-ready or at the very beginning stages. Here's the call for proposals: <http://www.sustainablesites.org/pilot/>

Kathi Mestayer

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Nancy Norton and I participated in the Christmas Bird Count with Ruth Beck (plus Inga, Gus, Katherine and Terry) in College Woods and other locations in Williamsburg. Great fun...and here are some pictures of our feathered friends hanging out in the "wilds" of Williamsburg.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Patty Mahoney



Christmas Bird Count December 2009
Left to right: Sara Lewis, Alex
Minarik, Shirley Devan, Lee Schuster



Camellia at Magnolia Plantation's Audubon Swamp Garden.

Courtesy of Shirley Devan

See story on following pages

Charleston Adventures by Shirley Devan and Alice Kopinitz

Photos provided by Seig Kopinitz

In the December 2009 issue of The Flyer, Fred Blystone described “birdingpal – a global website for traveling birders, helping you to find local contacts and information about birdwatching and it lists many local birdwatchers around the world willing to help a visitor bird in an area they are not familiar with.”

As Steve and I planned our Christmas week vacation in Charleston, SC with Seig and Alice Kopinitz, I wanted to make the best use of my designated “one birding day.” I turned to “birdingpal” and connected with Hollace Boswell, a birder in Charleston who works part time in the hospitality industry for one of the B&Bs. I learned that Hollace was not only a “birdingpal”, but also an active member of the South Carolina Master Naturalists Group!

The night before our trip, Hollace called me at home with the scoop. “Are you ready to write?” she asked. I was! She then described to me the best restaurants in Charleston for adventurous eaters, the best Charleston walking tour leader, the best places to bird, and even tracked down an organized bird walk for us on Wednesday, December 23.



Every one of her recommendations was right on target. While driving down Monday, we made a dinner reservation at one of her suggested restaurants. She also had reserved space for us on a walking tour at 11 am Tuesday with the same tour guide who does the City Slicker Tour of Charleston for the iPhone app. Wow! His name was Tommy Dew. He grew up in King and Queen County in VA and one of his ancestors, Thomas Roderick Dew, was the 13th President of W&M from 1836 – 1846. Tommy Dew knew Virginia well but he knew Charleston even better. He led us through churchyards, alleyways and main thoroughfares, describing the culture, economy and geology that made Charleston the city it was in the 19th century and the city it is today. After the official tour was over, we walked all afternoon in the balmy 55-degree sunshine. The bird of the day was a Red-bellied Woodpecker seemingly making a living on the side of a brick home down near the battery. Very unusual behavior.

Wednesday was our “birding day.” Hollace recommended a regular bird walk at Caw Caw County Park outside of Charleston (www.ccprc.com). The park was “once part of several rice plantations and home to enslaved Africans who applied their technology and skills in agriculture to carve the series of rice fields out of cypress swamps” per the web site. The walk took us around a matrix of dikes, and the old rice fields were filled with water from the recent heavy rains. The locals said they could not remember the water being so high. We followed Perry Nugent around the park until 12:30. We did not stay for the final tally, but the highlights for us were: several Black-and-

Continued from Page 13

white Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, a Blue-headed Vireo, Pine Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Golden-crowned Kinglets, two Tri-colored Herons, a Little Blue Heron, and Red-shouldered Hawk.

The next stop was the Donnelly Wildlife Management Area about 10 miles west on Route 17. Reliable reports of Whooping Cranes the previous week peaked our interest.



“Donnelly WMA, an 8000-acre tract of land managed by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, is home to diverse habitats including rice impoundments of the former Mary's Island Plantation, long-leaf pine forest, and tidal marsh. Donnelly WMA is in the heart of South Carolina's 350,000-acre ACE (Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto rivers) Basin, one of the East Coast's largest undeveloped areas of estuaries and associated wetlands. Bald eagles, turkey vultures, ospreys, wood storks, gallinules, coots, cormorants, eastern kingbirds, red-winged blackbirds, anhingas, and varieties of geese, grebes, loons, terns, vireos, ducks, sparrows, wrens, mergansers, warblers, hawks, herons, and many others make Donnelly WMA a mother lode of birds. Alligators, turtles, frogs, and otters populate the waterways; and the woods are filled with white-tailed deer, raccoons, wild turkeys, and foxes.” (http://www.trails.com/tcatalog_trail.aspx?trailid=HGD078-057)



We were chasing the light and Hollace was eager to show us her favorite spots in this wild area that she visits often. We did not find the Whooping Cranes but we did spot a bobcat! A life mammal for all of us! Seig even got photos!

Hollace had confirmed that Magnolia Plantation would be a good spot for us to see a true southern plantation with its elaborate gardens and natural areas. It was open on Christmas Eve so that was a plus! We opted out of paying for the house tour and paid instead for access to the gardens and grounds as well as the adjacent Audubon Swamp Forest. We ambled through the winter gardens where many camellias were blooming. A Hermit Thrush peaked up from the leaf litter. Down by the pond, a Great Egret and a Great Blue Heron battled it out for a favorite fishing spot. The heron won this day's battle and the photographers in our group got great photos of the heron catching a fish and swallowing it.

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After lunch we visited the Audubon Swamp Forest – a cypress and tupelo swamp that was full to overflowing from recent heavy rains. The herp of the day was an alligator sunning himself on a perch in the swamp. We counted seven nests in the Great Blue Heron rookery and the birds appeared to be pairing up.

Rain moved in for Christmas Day so we opted for the afternoon showing of the 3D IMAX version of “Avatar.”

Hollace reminded us several times to encourage visitors to contact her for information about Charleston and its surrounding treasures – natural and cultural. If you plan to go in that direction, contact me and I’ll give you her phone and email info. Modern southern hospitality at its best!

Additional photos from this trip can be found at Alice & Seig’s Flickr site which is linked from the VMN HR website photo pages.



The *Casey Trees Tree Summit* hosted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments will focus on the condition of the District's existing Urban Tree Canopy and potential strategies to increase the canopy from 35 to 40 percent by 2035.

Casey Trees Tree Summit will bring together a multi-disciplinary group of researchers and professionals from federal, regional and local government and other communities involved in setting and implementing tree canopy goals as well as stakeholders from grassroots and community groups.

Speakers and program agenda forthcoming.

Location: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

777 North Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Time: 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Fee: \$40.00 per person – includes lunch and morning and afternoon break service. *(If registration poses a financial burden, please contact Mike Galvin, Deputy Director, at mgalvin@caseytrees.org)*

Advance registration required. Space is limited.

Spring has sprung???

By Linda Cole

The winter solstice came at 12:47 p.m. on December 21st and I have been told that the days are slowly getting longer as dark gives way to light. I am not able to personally verify this imperceptible increase in the length of days but I can begin my preparations for the inevitable arrival of spring. But is spring as very far off as the calendar suggests?

According to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' (VDGIF) website, <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/frogsurvey>, there are several species of frogs that begin breeding as early as February and for frogs breeding brings calling. In Virginia physiographic region 1 there are seven frogs with early start periods for calling as shown in the following table extracted from VDGIF's Virginia's Frog and Toad Summary - Where to Find Them and When They Start Callin

Species	Months	Special Needs or Notes
Brimley's chorus frog (<i>Pseudacris brimleyi</i>)	Feb-Apr	Breeding season habitats include marshes, shallow ponds, and ditche.
Northern spring peeper (<i>Pseudacris crucifer crucifer</i>)	Feb-May	Breeding season habitats include woodland ponds, swamps, and ditches
Southern chorus frog (<i>Pseudacris nigrita</i>)	Late winter to early spring	In VA, little is known about this species but it has been reported locally in York County
Upland chorus frog (<i>Pseudacris feriarum feriarum</i>)	Feb-May	Requires semi-permanent late winter pools for breeding
Pickerel frog (<i>Lithobates palustris</i>) new (<i>Rana palustris</i>) old	Mar-May	Needs a heavy rain; requires moist environment with standing water in late winter for breeding
Wood frog (<i>Lithobates sylvaticus</i>) new (<i>Rana sylvatica</i>) old	Feb	Few days after 1 st spring thaw; prefers ponds, slow moving portions of streams and ditches for breeding; not known locally
Southern leopard frog (<i>Lithobates sphenoccephalus utricularius</i>) new (<i>Rana sphenoccephala</i>) old	Feb-Dec	Needs grassy, marshy habitat to breed

Species that tolerate cold temperatures have been shown to have glycerol in their body tissues that is absent in the summer.

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The United State Geological Survey (USGS) maintains a database of frog calls that can be found at <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/frogquiz/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.lookup>. The USGS describes the frog calls as shown in the following table.

Species	Call
Brimley's chorus frog (<i>Pseudacris brimleyi</i>)	Sounds like a short, rasping trill that lasts less than a second and is repeated a dozen or more times
Northern spring peeper (<i>Pseudacris crucifer crucifer</i>)	Sounds like a high, piping whistle; large chorus sounds like sleigh bells
Southern chorus frog (<i>Pseudacris nigrita</i>)	Sounds like a mechanical repetitive sound; similar to a ratchet
Upland chorus frog (<i>Pseudacris feriarum feriarum</i>)	Sounds like a regularly repeated "prreep" or like running a finger over the small teeth of a pocket comb
Pickerel frog (<i>Lithobates palustris</i>) new (<i>Rana palustris</i>) old	Sounds like a steady, low-pitched snore lasting 1-2 seconds
Wood frog (<i>Lithobates sylvaticus</i>) new (<i>Rana sylvatica</i>) old	Sounds like a hoarse clacking sound; like the quack of a duck with little carrying power
Southern leopard frog (<i>Lithobates sphenocephalus utricularius</i>) new (<i>Rana sphenocephala</i>) old	Sounds like a short, chuckle-like, guttural trill; some calls like that of rubbing a hand back and forth over a rubber balloon

As Asian chestnuts roast in the oven and J. Frost blankets the morning windshield, now is a great time to learn to identify the early callers. Being able to identify frogs by ear as well as sight is an invaluable tool. Our own Felice Bond is registered with VDGIF as a Frog and Toad Surveyor for James City County. Working with Felice on a survey earns volunteer service hours toward certification. Of course, these skills are invaluable for the Wildlife Mapping projects! Froggie went a courtin'...



HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

The annual December holiday meeting was a great success as you can see from the pictures. All pictures are courtesy of Seig Kopinitz.



The "Green" winner—Adrienne Frank (with Gary Driscoll looking on) and the "Red" winner—Susan Engle-Hill with Bruce Hill (r)

