

# The Naturalist

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
FROM THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER  
VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

Virginia  
Master  
Naturalist



MARCH 2018

Volume 12, Number 2

## The President's Message

by Judy Jones

Two years ago, I wrote to you about a YouTube commercial Doug Dwyer had shared with us. It was a humorous but pointed message that explained that if we are "tired, irritable, or stressed out, try prescription-strength 'Nature'." The side effects included "spontaneous euphoria, being in a good mood for no apparent reason, and developing a genuine caring for ourselves, for others, and for the world we live in." It increases "confidence, honesty, and authenticity, as well as relieving work-induced catatonia". This commercial captured perfectly the synergy of skills, enthusiasm, knowledge, and experience we find in Historic Rivers Chapter. As a group, we are wise beyond any one of our individual chunks of knowledge. And the laughter that resonates through each of our projects is as important as the pleasure we experience in the activities themselves. The philosophy of sharing information and the enthusiasm of our members performing these endeavors together provides excellent comradery at a level some organizations never achieve.

It's impressive to have such a depth and range of talent in our Chapter. As individuals, we enjoy being together, each doing our part to make the experience meaningful for the group. It's amazing to watch the members interact with each other as they contribute their expertise. Our diverse personalities become compatible; our talents merge to form an amazing skill set. The end point is greater than any one of us individually. Other organizations should be envious of the dynamics and the span of environmental skills across our Chapter members. What a distinguishing characteristic to have in an organization of volunteers.

And now, two years later, the words still resonate, and the prescription still applies. We are an amazing group of individuals who, together, can accomplish great things. Thank you for always giving to our community, to our environment, and to our HRC the best energies you can. And don't forget to take your dose of "prescription strength Nature" every day.

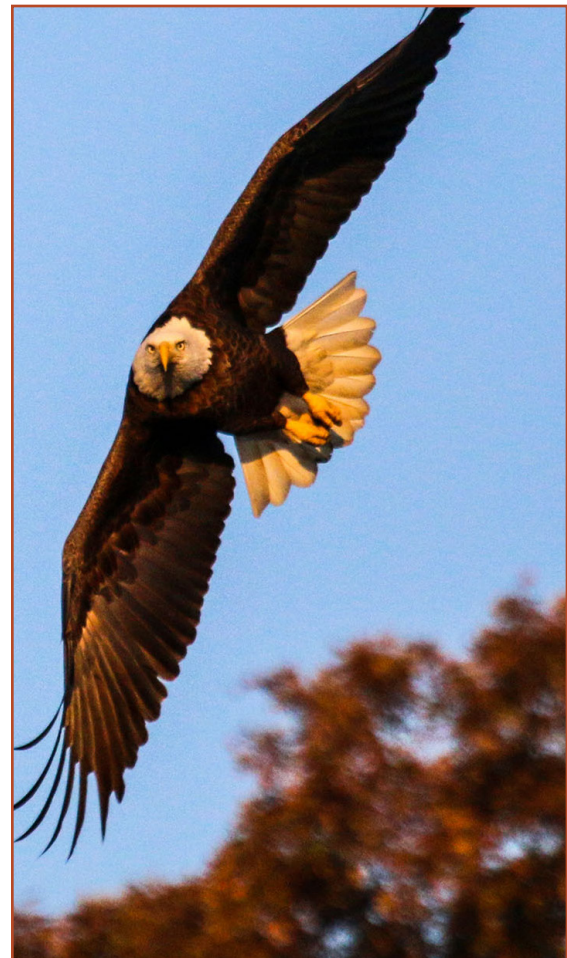


Photo by Judy Jones

### **MASTER NATURALIST FRIENDS** by Sara Lewis

Please join Sara Lewis at New Quarter Park on Saturday, March 24, from 10 am to 12 noon for Tales from Oyster Shells and Bones, an Environmental Archaeology Walk & Talk. Read all about it here: [www.yorkcounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8045](http://www.yorkcounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8045)

Also: Upcoming Walk & Talks (10-noon) at New Quarter Park:

April 14 - Forest Bathing with Certified Shinrin-Yoku Guide

May 26 - Great Snakes with Tim Christensen

### **UPCOMING ARCHAEOLOGY:**

April 27 & 28 - Dig Days - Sign up by emailing [Fairfield@FairfieldFoundation.org](mailto:Fairfield@FairfieldFoundation.org) with your choice of day and morning (9-12) or afternoon (1-4) shift.

April 13 and following second Fridays monthly - Artifact Wash & Talks at the park office, 10 am-12 noon.

Please join us!

# The New Bluebirding Season is On

On Friday, March 2nd, Mary Jo Davis-Headly joined Judy Jones to move two and install three new bluebird boxes at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park. On a beautiful but extremely windy day, we put in the five boxes and then checked the rest of the trail, which now totals 19. We were delighted to see a partial bluebird's nest in one of our boxes and feel this foretells a good bluebirding year at the Chick!



**Mary Jo Davis-Headly** Photo by Judy Jones

## Chapter Board

Chapter Advisor	Page Hutchinson
President	Adrienne Frank
Vice President, Programs	Linda Morse
Co-recording Secretaries	Sue Mutell, Connie Reitz
Treasurer	Barbara Neis
Membership	Renee Dallman
Volunteer Service Projects	Shirley Devan
Continuing Education	Jennifer Trevino
Basic Training	David Lunt, Janet Harper
Past President	Judy Jones
Historian	Keith Navia
Education & Outreach	Sherry Brubaker, Karen Grass
Publicity	Joni Carlson
Newsletter	Cindy Baker
Field Trip Coordinators	Maud Ann Wilson, Barb Bucklin
Host Committee	Randi Heise
Members-at-Large	Sharon Plocher, Gary Driscoll, Rick Brown, Alister Perkinson, Joe Beene
Webmaster	Jeanette Navia
Social Media	Sonny Bowers



**Look who popped out of a tree to check on the board.** Photo of Eastern Screech Owl by Nancy Barnhardt

# Judy, Judy, Judy

## A PROFILE OF JUDY JONES



**On the night of Cohort XII's Graduation, Judy Jones was awarded her 2,500 volunteer hour pin by Renee Dallman—only it hadn't come in.**

*Photo by George Reiske*

### JUDY SAYS THANK YOU

**"What an opportunity, what an experience, what great fun it's been! I must honestly say that I have loved being president. This chapter is such an amazing one, filled with active, interested, involved individuals who work together to make a difference. As president, you see how all the pieces come together. Your vision is widened and your appreciation for the teamwork, incredible skills, and knowledge of the chapter members increases manifold. I am so grateful for board's guidance during my two years as well as for the collaboration and support of chapter members. Your help and backing allowed me to be a good representative of this great organization. Now we are very fortunate to have Adrienne Frank taking on the role of president. She offers a history, an understanding, and a depth of knowledge that will make her an exceptional president, and with the new and dedicated board, the future looks bright for our Historic Rivers Chapter."**

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Up at the crack of dawn to walk Willow, Judy Jones gets busy right away. She might bird a favorite spot or wildlife map at York River State Park. Her days are usually a whirlwind of volunteer activities for Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists, the Williamsburg Bird Club and photography, among other activities.

"My days begin at 5:30 or 6 and I go up to bed about 10 to read for an hour. But no two days are the same," she says.

And it's not only HRC that benefits from Judy's leadership. As she relinquishes the reins at HRC, she recently became the Vice President of Programs for the Williamsburg Bird Club.

Judy grew up a Connecticut Yankee with wonderful parents whose advice she admits seems wiser the older she gets (like many of us). She had three brothers who "spoiled me to bits," she says. She knew from her elementary school years she wanted to be a teacher. "When I hit high school I knew I wanted to become a teacher in the Department of Defense Overseas Dependent Schools," she explained.

She taught for the prerequisite two years and then was sent to teach for six years in Subic Bay, the Philippines. "It was during the Vietnam War so the bases were busy, the sailors intense, and the children anxious and distracted," she recalled.

Her three brothers, all military, were stationed in different parts of Asia, and so they saw each other from time to time. "It was a scary, exciting, harsh and beautiful time. I treasure the memories of those years," Judy says.

After leaving the Philippines, she moved to Williamsburg in 1978. "The school system was tiny—three elementary schools, one middle and one high school. I was a classroom teacher at Bruton Heights and Berkeley and then became the reading specialist at Matthew Whaley, ending my career there after 42 years," she says. "Those years were filled with learning, laughing and unbelievable challenges. I wouldn't trade them for the world."

A retirement gift of a digital point and shoot and the influence of Nancy Norton, Cohort IV ("My Nancy") opened up a new world for Judy. She learned she loved making photos and sharing them. "My basic point and shoot became a SLR and then a fancier version of my beloved Canon. When I first became a Master Naturalist and saw the photos that Felice Bond made, I knew I wanted to become as successful as she is. So that's my goal—I'm not there yet, but I'm working on it," she says.

Judy's wonderful nature photography is the result of hours of mapping with Les Lawrence. He taught her to love birding and Cheryl Jacobson taught her how to ID. "But I was lousy at both." So the camera became an important part of her birding challenge. "Going home, looking again at the photos with my Sibley's right beside me became so valuable," Judy says.

She joined the Colonial Nature Photography Club and began to learn more than photography basics. "Barbara Houston is a great mentor there and Cheryl and Les continue to try to work their magic. Today I'm a better photographer than birder, but both skills are only slowly improving," she says.

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Like all of us, she's had some embarrassing moments in the field. Judy was birding with Jennifer Trevino and Shirley Devan. "I asked, very seriously, 'What are the large birds in the pond? 'Canada Geese,' Jennifer replied. Enough said." Her most ecstatic times, which happen all too infrequently, are the moments when the light, the animal, the sky, and the camera settings all mesh for 'The Picture'. "It doesn't seem to happen often, but when it does, it's lovely."



**Juvenile Eagle diving for prey**



**Sunrise on the James**

*All photos by Judy Jones*

## **SOME OF JUDY'S FAVORITE BIRDING SPOTS**

**HARRISON LAKE—I LOVE TO SEE THE GOLDFINCH  
AND VIREOS WORKING THE WILDFLOWERS.**

**CHINCOTEAGUE**

**EAGLE AND OSPREY PHOTO TRIPS WITH CAPTAIN  
MIKE OSTRANDER.**

**CAPTAIN RICK KELLAM IN WACHAPREAGUE**

**MESSICK POINT**

**SKYLINE DRIVE**

**KIPTOPEKE**



**Praying as well as Preying**



**Dogwood Glory**

# Congrats Cohort XII Grads



**Front row l to r: Glenda White, Deena Obrokta; Middle row l to r: Melissa Schutt, Kathleen Jabs, Wendy Nelson, Betty Bennick, Robin Culler, Melody Mosbaugher, Julia Thomas, Carolyn Black; Back row l to r: Rick Brown, Rose Ryan, Claire White, Pam Schnabel, Paul Showalter, Scott Hemler, Frank DeBolt, Joe Gerdes, Lisa Reagan. Absent from picture: Jan Marry.**

*Photos by George Reiske*

On Wednesday, March 14, our Historic River Chapter of VMN met at the James City County Library to hold our special March meeting. After hearing our guest speaker Jason Bullock, Director of the Virginia Natural Heritage Program, we had our election of new officers, and then we celebrated **GRADUATION** for our 20 new Cohort XII members.

These are the new members who worked so hard and accomplished so much:

Glenda White, Deena Obrokta, Melissa Schutt, Kathleen Jabs, Wendy Nelson, Betty Bennick, Robin Culler, Melody Mosbaugher, Julia Thomas, Carolyn Black, Rick Brown, Rose Ryan, Claire White, Pam Schnabel, Paul Showalter, Scott Hemler, Frank DeBolt, Joe Gerdes, and Lisa Reagan.

Jan Marry was also a member of the graduating Cohort XII but she was absent.

During their six months of training, these twenty Cohort XII members participated in classes and field trips which taught them about the Nature of Naming, Butterflies, Evolution and Biology Basics, MN Skills, Risk Management, Entomology, Plant Biology, Wetlands Ecology, Forest Conservation, Macroinvertebrates, Native Plants, Interpretive Skills and Toolboxes, Volunteer Projects and Citizen Science, Geology, Ornithology, Ecology Concepts, Local Habitats, Dendrology, Naturalists' Biographies, Herpetology, Mammalogy, Ichthyology, Climate and Weather, Climate Change, HRC-VMN board meetings, birdwalks, and plant walks. In addition to all the requirements that Cohort XII



**L to r: Barb Neis, Karen Glass, Bill Vanzetta, Shirley Devan, Maud Ann Wilson, Janet Harper and David Lunt.**

successfully completed, they also did something else amazing—during their training months, the combined volunteer hours that they managed to accumulate were **796.5 volunteer hours!!!!** Is that amazing or what?!! We gratefully thank each of them for their deep caring and wonderful volunteering.

David Lunt, co-chairman of the Cohort XII training team, congratulated the newest members and asked rhetorically about what they will do now that their training is complete. He drew many laughs when he mentioned all the objectives and slides that were covered during training. He reminded everyone that their learning will never be over as they (and all of us) continue to learn as they/we volunteer. He finished by thanking **Sharon Plocher** for her artistic posters, the **class presenters** for their time and expertise, all of our **HRC partners** for supporting our organization, and **everyone in Cohort XII** for trusting the Basic Training team with their time.

Following this, the entire training team of David Lunt (co-chair), Janet Harper (co-chair), Barb Neis, Karen Grass, Bill Vanzetta, Shirley Devan, and Maud Ann Wilson presented certificates and gift bags to each new member. NUMEROUS congratulatory pictures were snapped by George Reiske.

Twelve Cohort XII members were further congratulated for earning their certification by accumulating at least 8 hours of Continuing Education and 40 volunteer hours in addition to all the requirements of Basic Training. They are Betty Bennick, Rick Brown, Robin Culler, Frank DeBolt, Scott Hemler, Kathleen Jabs, Jan Marry, Wendy Nelson, Deena Obrokta, Rose Ryan, Melissa Schutt and Glenda White.

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Three representative members of Cohort XII (Betty Bennick, Carolyn Black, and Scott Hemler) presented their "12 Reasons That You Know You Have Arrived at Being a Master Naturalist" and everyone cheered. One of the best was—"You know you're a MN if you take binoculars out to get the mail!" So RIGHT ON! They also thanked the Basic Training team and gave each member a surprise recognition.

## Fifth Fridays Continue in 2018

### CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION OYSTER RESTORATION PROJECT STEWARDSHIP

In 2017, we initiated a "Fifth Fridays at VIMS" project with Chesapeake Bay Foundation Oyster Restoration Project staffers Heather North and Jackie Shannon. On months with a fifth Friday, we meet at their Gloucester Point work site to lightly wash oyster shells collected from area restaurants and bag them for use on oyster restoration reefs in the Bay.

The fun will continue in 2018! Mark your calendars now – March 30, June 29, August 31, and November 30 – and join us from 9 am to 12 noon. Dress for the weather and plan to get wet and messy as we wash off the cocktail sauce and pick out the lemon slices, then fill bags of shells as we do our bit to Save the Bay. You'll need to fill out a health form for CBF. Plan to do it there or contact me at [slewis@cox.net](mailto:slewis@cox.net) and I will send a copy for you to print and fill out ahead of time. The form is required each calendar year, so if you submitted one last year, be prepared to do it again. Charge your volunteer hours to S3d-Oyster Restoration Projects-VIMS/CBF for this stewardship project.

The work requires a little bit of muscle, but it's easy enough. Shells are dumped on a conveyor belt and washed, then loaded into net bags. Bags of shells are twisted, clamped shut, and loaded in wheelbarrows that our most hearty soul wheels over to pallets and unloads. In the spring, the bags are loaded into tanks and oyster larvae are added. At this stage in their life cycle, they attach to shell substrate to grow on a spot where they spend the rest of their lives. During the summer, the shells with baby oysters attached will be dumped from the bags onto reefs in Chesapeake Bay rivers. As a keystone species, oysters filter water and reefs provide habitat for young fish, crabs, and other Bay creatures. Oysters were decimated by disease and over-harvesting through the mid-20th century. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation have been working since then to study and restore oysters and the critical habitat they provide.

After our outgoing president Judy Jones was awarded her 2,500 volunteer hours milestone by Renee Dallman, everyone was invited to a wonderful reception organized and led by our dedicated social chairman Randi Heise.

BIG CONGRATULATIONS go to our newest Cohort XII HRC-VMN members. We wish them many hours of volunteering and new friendships!

Let me know if you're in for the first 5th Friday, March 30, from 9 am to 12 noon by emailing me at [slewis@cox.net](mailto:slewis@cox.net). I'll be emailing and recruiting during the week before the 5th Friday volunteer date.

#### Directions to VIMS/CBFORP:

Cross the George P. Coleman Bridge (Route 17 North) to Gloucester.

Turn right at the first traffic light after crossing the bridge.

Turn right on Route 1208. The VIMS campus is just ahead.

Proceed down the hill toward the York River and turn right under the bridge.

Turn right, left, and left to follow the road around the VIMS boat basin.

Look for the CBFORP work site straight ahead, on the southwest edge of the boat basin near the York River beach.

If using GPS, use the address 1200 Franklin Road, Gloucester Point, Virginia 23062



*health form on page 7*



# Wildflower of the Month – April 2018

JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

WILD PANSY (*Viola bicolor*) By Helen Hamilton, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

The native Field or Wild Pansy (*V. bicolor*), is a welcome sign of spring, blooming all over fields, meadows, and roadsides. Spoon-shaped leaves are alternate on the stem and flanked by paired leafy appendages (stipules) that are deeply cut into narrow lobes. The flower has 5 pale blue petals, the lower petals are purplish-veined, and there is a yellow center. All violets eject their seeds mechanically from the pods. Under mature plants, seedlings from the prior year will germinate, creating nice groundcover in spring and early summer.

This is a winter or spring annual, often forming dense colonies, which is why some gardeners view them as weeds. Truly opportunistic, they reproduce in 3 ways: runners produce additional clonal plants, visiting insects cross-pollinate the flowers to produce seeds, and special buds remain closed and self-pollinate. These are seen at the base of mature plants, oval and whitish on long stems.

Wild Pansy tolerates sandy, clayey and limy soils and is found in most of the eastern U.S. except the extreme north. Field Pansy is most often seen in roadsides and fields of coastal Virginia, while the large blue Common Blue Violet (*Viola sororia*) is more common in gardens.

Violets are not fussy about growing conditions – full or part sun, moist to part dry soil, they will cover the ground until the heat of summer begins to shrivel the leaves. Since the caterpillars of Fritillary butterflies lay their eggs and eat the leaves of violets, these are highly desirable plants in the home landscape.

Field Pansy has also been called the “Confederate violet” since the small flowers are thought to be the tears of Confederate soldiers as they left the battlefield. The blue-veined grayish-white morph of the Common Blue Violet, *V. sororia*, is also commonly known as “Confederate Violet.”

While violets were known in the 4th century B.C., cultivated by the Greeks as an herbal medicine, experiments in England in the 1800s produced the familiar hybrid garden pansy. The term “pansy” originated from the French pensée, for “thought”, and the Latin pensare, for “weight, consider”, referring perhaps to the nodding appearance of many pansy faces.

For more information about native plants visit [www.vnps.org](http://www.vnps.org).



**Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)** Photo by Helen Hamilton

# A SURE SIGN OF SPRING

*By VDOF Senior Area Forester Scott Bachman*



It is not quite spring, but the signs of spring are abundant at the New Kent Forestry Center. This photo shows one of the first signs of spring.

These loblolly pine trees appear to have grown paper bags on their tips! These contractors are placing bags on the trees to protect the soon-to-be receptive pine flowers (Strobili) from wind-blown pollen. That brings up an obvious question, why?

These trees are destined to be used for control pollination seed production. Control pollinated trees are some of the most highly desired tree seedlings that the VDOF produces. They are desirable because the parentage of the seedlings is known. These trees are like fine race horses, a flower from a fast growing tree is crossed with pollen from another fast growing tree. The bags are essential to this process.

"In nature, loblolly pine trees typically are pollinated at random with the possibility of self-pollination, though rare, because of the way pollen and flowers are disposed on the tree," explains VDOF Tree Improvement Forester, Onesphore Bitoki.

"In general most of the flowers are in the top part of the tree crown while most of the pollen is at the bottom of the tree crown on the same tree."

Loblolly pine trees in the forest are pollinated by the wind. Another sure sign of spring is finding your car covered in a fine yellow/green dust — loblolly pollen! The tree improvement staff can use this to their advantage. They can cover the flowers in a seed orchard tree with a bag and then inject pollen into the bag from a known fast-growing tree. The resulting seed produced in the cone will have the high quality genetics of the two parent trees.

The covering of the branch tips is just the first step on a long process. After the pollen season is over, the bags are removed from the tree and the cones marked. Not all cones on a tree are "bagged" so each tip that was control pollinated must be tracked for 18 months before it is picked. Pollinated cones will grow and develop seeds over the next two summers. These high value cones, as well as our other orchard trees, are also managed to control insects that would like to eat the growing seed in the cones.

When the cones are finally mature they are harvested in Fall, typically in October, using high lifts or bucket trucks making sure the marked cones are kept separate from wind pollinated cones. Each cone is hand-picked and placed into marked containers identifying their "parents." This "name" will stay with each cone as it is dried and the seed removed, prepared for planting, planted, harvested at the nursery, packaged and ultimately sold to a landowner. Like a fine race horse, this new fast-growing pine stand can trace a pedigree back to these paper bags in the New Kent Forestry Center.



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# Upcoming Continuing Education (CE) Opportunities

## April 2018

The Continuing Education (CE) calendar is posted on the VMN Volunteer Management System website. When you log in to enter your hours, you can find the link to the CE calendar in the left-hand column under, Event Calendars—Continuing Education. [Click an activity on the calendar and open to find a more detailed description \(including registration information, contact information, any cost, etc.\) of the continuing education activity.](#) Reminder: Travel time is not a part of CE credit/hour(s). Note: Should additional applicable CE event(s) come up during the month the event(s) will be posted on the CE calendar in the VMN Volunteer Management System.

Christopher Wren classes that contain content on the natural environment are accepted as CE training. CW classes require registration and payment (\$\$\$) through the W&M Christopher Wren Association. Typically, there are 3 session and 6 session courses. Applicable courses are listed on the CE Calendar. VLM programs require registration through the VLM. VIMS programs require registration through the VIMS.

If you have a question about the relevance of a topic for Continuing Education or wish to check whether or not you can obtain CE hours, please contact the Continuing Education Chair, Jennifer Trevino, [jbktrevino8@cox.net](mailto:jbktrevino8@cox.net)

WED 03/28/2018	C. Wren Class-Shoreline Studies- 1:30-3:30 pm- W&M Campus Little Theatre-3 of 3 sessions - \$\$\$
WED 03/28/2018	Southern Regional Extension Forestry: 2018 Urban & Community Forestry Webinar Series; "From Science to Action; Evidence-Based Programs for Nature and Webinar Series; "From Science to Action; Evidence-Based Programs for Nature and Health Communities," 1:00 pm eastern; join webinar at <a href="https://sref.info">https://sref.info</a> , click the title for this series, "2018 Urban & Community Forestry . . . " then click individual webinar for this series, "2018 Urban & Community Forestry . . . " then click individual webinar title.
THU 03/29/2018	VIMS After Hrs Lecture, "The Science Behind Oyster Breeding," 7:00-8:00 pm, VIMS
SUN 04/01/2018	Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC) Sunday Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7:00 am
WED 04/04/2018	C. Wren Class-"For the Beauty of It All-America's National Parks," 1:30 pm, W&M Campus Center Little Theater, \$\$\$ (1 of 3 sessions)
SAT 04/07/2018 SUN 04/08/2018	HRC weekend trip to Virginia Museum of Natural History, Martinsville, VA; participants unlimited; tour of the museum and a VMN activity; cabin rental at Fairystone State Park; further information to come from Field Trip Committee; CE credit TBD
SAT 04/07/2018	John Clayton Chpt, Native Plant Society, Plant Walk at Matteson Trail Paw Paw, Hampton Performing Arts / Hampton Youth & Aquatic Center, Hampton VA, 10 am
WED 04/11/2018	C. Wren Class-"For the Beauty of It All-America's National Parks,"1:30 pm W&M Campus Center Little Theater, \$\$\$ (2 of 3 sessions)
WED 04/11/2018	HRC Gen Meeting - 6pm, JCC Library, Kitzinger Room- "Ordinary People Changing the Face of Discovery"
SAT 04/14/2018	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) Bird Walk at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, 8:00am
SAT 04/14/2018	John Clayton Chpt, Native Plant Society, A Walk in the Habitat, Stonehouse Habitat Garden, 10:00 am.

SUN 04/15/2018	Hampton Roads Bird Club (HRBC) Sunday Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7:00 am
WED 04/18/2018	C. Wren Class-"For the Beauty of It All-America's National Parks," 1:30 pm, W&M Campus Center Little Theater, \$\$\$ (3 of 3 sessions)
SAT 04/21/2018	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) Monthly Field Trip, 8:00 am, Location TBD
SAT 04/21/2018	WBotGarden-"Gardening for Birds and Butterflies," 10 am, Freedom Park Interpretive Center
WED 04/25/2018	HRC Field Trip to Quarry Gardens- Schuyler VA, 2:00 pm
THU 04/26/2018	VIMS After Hrs Lecture, "It's A Keeper," 7:00-8:00 pm
SAT 04/28/2018	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) Bird Walk- New Quarter Park, 8:00 am
SAT 04/28/2018	John Clayton Chpt, Native Plant Society, A Walk through Baptist Run Area of Newport News Park, 10:00 am
MON 04/30/2018	"Year of the Bird," A Talk by Bill Williams, Williamsburg Library 515 Scotland St., 7 pm