



THE NATURALIST

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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 8 No. 4 April 2014

Chapter Board of Directors 2014-2015

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Message from the President

Greetings Historic Rivers Chapter Members!

I am very proud to be President of the Historic Rivers Chapter. I'm standing on the shoulders of exceptional Presidents who have gone before me. I will try not to mess things up! Sometimes the President's job is to not get in the way! I hope I'll know when that is.

I am particularly grateful for the Board members who have served in the past and their commitment to making the Chapter so successful. Your service created an award-winning Chapter that stands as a model for others in the state.

Just like the Boards in past, our current Board is staffed with talented, committed leaders who work together to ensure the success of our projects, education, partnerships, community, and Chapter.

I am fortunate because I've gotten to know **ALL** of you as you made your way through Basic Training. I enjoy working with you on so many projects, and I feel very lucky to be part of such a wonderful group and to count you all as my friends in this life-long learning adventure.

Thanks to everyone for all you do to make our Chapter successful. Let's continue our good works and efforts. I hope you will call on me with questions, concerns, and opportunities.

Shirley Devan

President

Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist

Ahhhhh...Spring



Eastern Bluebird



Pine Warbler



Photos by Inge Curtis

Notes from the Board

All meetings of the Board of Directors are open to members.

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HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER



Congratulations New Members - Cohort 8!

For more photos go to our Chapter's Flickr site:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/historicrivers/with/13134661775/>

These photos taken by Felice Bond



HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Butterfly Circle Project

Now is the time to look for spring butterflies: Falcate Orangetip, Azures (3), Elfins (2), and Duskywings (3). Please look for and take photos of what you find. Be sure to record places and dates. We are going to try to identify when and where we see each species. We want to record when each butterfly appears. This week, several people saw the Falcate Orangetip on April 1st for the first time this season.

Spring Azures are of particular interest. If you can get any close up photos of them please record the date and place and send them to us (Adrienne-gary@co.net). I will pass them to Brian Taber and he will pass them to the national experts to try to identify them.

Azures are small butterflies that are blue grey on the top/open wings and white with dark spots on the closed wings. There are 3 kinds found in our area: Summer, Spring, and Holly.

Summer Azure (*Celastrina neglecta*) is easy to identify in the summer because it is the only one flying during the hot months. In the spring, it may be present and so distinguishing it in spring could be difficult.

Spring Azure (*Celastrina ladon*) and the "new" species Holly Azure (*Celastrina idella*) fly in the spring. Holly Azure has gone by American Holly and Atlantic Holly, which apparently are not useful names for identification purposes. In the 1999 "Butterflies Through Binoculars," Glassberg says...azures present " a bewildering array of forms..."....and Holly is not listed.

An expert said, "Spring Azures are usually a deeper blue than spring-form Summer Azures. There are some scale-pattern differences, but you need to use forceps and a loupe to see it. You can't reliably separate the two from ventral features. A bit easier, if you can get some pics of the dorsal wings, send them for a crosscheck.



on Nancy Gore's shoe at YRSP



Photo from Brian Taber's backyard



Saturday

April 26th

Annual Plant Sale!

9:00 am

Come to the Sale or offer your help with set up!

To attend the sale:

Location: Jamestown Beach Park (2205 Jamestown Road) from 9 AM to 2 PM. Payment by cash or check.

The John Clayton Chapter will be selling Virginia native flowering perennials, ferns, grasses, shrubs, vines, and small trees. Plants for all conditions: sun, shade, moist or dry; butterfly and bird gardens; RPAs and more!

Please, no early birds!

To Help:

The John Clayton Chapter of the VA Native Plant Society will be holding its annual plant sale on April 26th, and they would like our help on Friday to set up and/or on Saturday at the sale. After the plant sale, they are happy to donate left over plants to us to promote butterfly or other native habitat. You do not need to know a lot about plants. There will be plant experts available.

HRC BLUEBIRD BULLETIN

Bluebird nesting has been delayed this year, probably due to the cool, wet spring. Having repaired and cleaned and re-cleaned the nestboxes, our monitors have been making the rounds of the trails eagerly anticipating signs of nesting activity. The first weeks they found little. Last week was different with the discovery of several complete bluebird nests plus a few chickadee nests on most trails. One nest at Freedom Park held three bluebird eggs, making April 2 the official start of the 2014 season! For comparison, the first egg of 2013 was laid on April 11 and the first egg of 2012 was laid on March 22.

It's a pleasure to welcome our new monitors from Cohort VIII. We hope they will thoroughly enjoy the adventure of bluebird monitoring. We also welcome Pam Camblin to our team. Pam organizes a Nature Club at Poquoson Elementary School. With the support of school staff and administration and the assistance of parents and Stephen Living, a 10 box trail was installed at the school. Boxes were donated by the Hampton Roads Bird Club and others made by an Eagle Scout. She and her students monitor the trail. Pam is providing an extraordinary educational experience for these young people, as well as safe homes for bluebirds.

In addition, two new trails, each numbering 15-17 boxes, are being installed. Stephanie Schmuck and Susie Engle are leading a trail at the York County Sports Complex and Judy Jones and Kathy Cross are leading another at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park. Thank you ladies for your leadership in seeing these opportunities to assist area bluebirds and the energy and enthusiasm to carry them out.



Photo by Mike Woodward

These two new trails would not be possible without the help and caring support of many people. We are extremely grateful to Jim Booth from Cohort II who has most generously donated his time and talent, as well as his wood supply, to making 15 nestboxes for some very lucky bluebird families to move into. Another half dozen boxes and equipment were transferred from existing HRC trails, while William and Mary allowed us to rehab nestboxes they no longer needed for their research and donated ALL the remaining poles and baffles required to install these trails. "Thank you" is entirely inadequate for these gifts but we do thank you all.

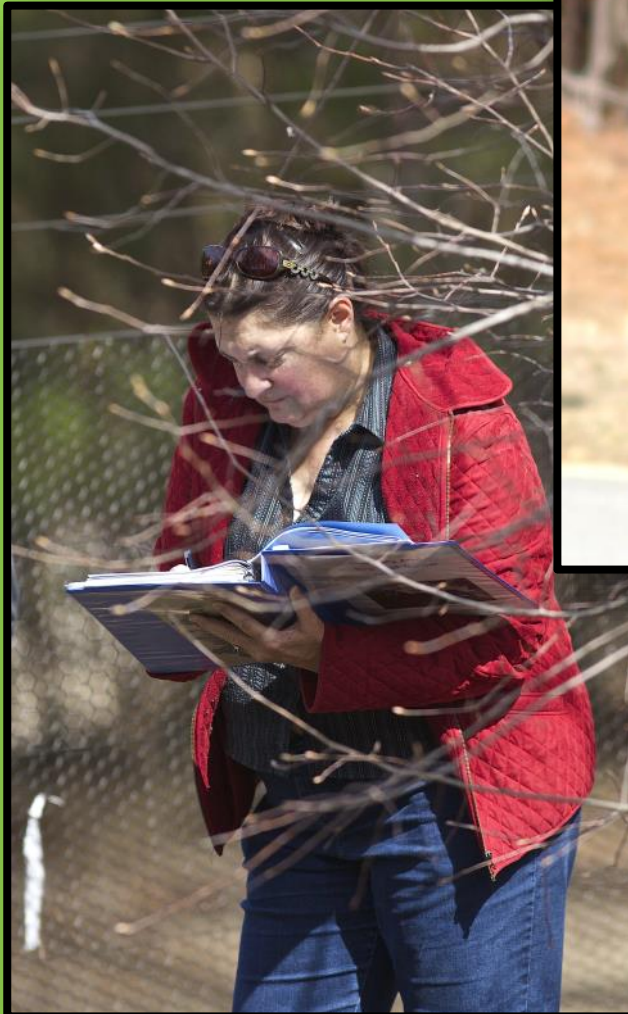
Jan Lockwood and Lois Ullman

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Bluebird Nestbox Monitoring at Freedom Park



Early in the Bluebird season we were checking our boxes in the freezing cold. Photo by Hart Haynes



Deb Woodward records findings in the Bluebird Monitoring notebook. Photo by Inge Curtis



We are a very social group. Deb Woodward, Sherry Brubaker, Inge Curtis. Photo by Hart Haynes

Special Award!

HRC's team of Wildlife Mapping, and their leader, Cheryl Jacobson, are receiving York County's 2014 Volunteer of the Year Award. The Award ceremony is Tuesday night, April 15 at 5:30 at York Hall in Yorktown.

We encourage any and all HRC members to attend this wonderful ceremony — particularly if you have done Wildlife Mapping at New Quarter Park.

Cheryl is out of town on a long planned trip. Receiving the award for her will be Cherie Aukland, who along with Susan Powell, "did a lot of major work to establish wildlife mapping and to initially set it up at the Park."

Per Cheryl: "It was easy then when I reestablished it. Also, without the support of Cherie's many hours of data entry, wildlife mapping in any of the designated areas would not have flourished as it has. I am so pleased that she can attend and receive the award on behalf of the chapter. I am hoping that any of you who have participated in mapping will attend also."





"Right, I'm a *passenger pigeon*. Very funny. Now go sit down and wait for the train, okay?"

Announcing: First Annual Anthropomorfest! By Kathi Mestayer

Inspired by *The New Yorker's* cartoon caption contest, I thought it would be fun if we tried our own hand at a nature-themed "CAPTION CONTEST."

No pressure; we're not doing it monthly, and no prizes will be awarded. Just chuckles from our fellow MNs....

For starters, send me, Kathi Mestayer, any photos of nature/wildlife you have that are just **CRYING OUT** for captions. Like the pigeon above. (You don't *have to* provide the caption....just give us the photo and we'll post it and ask our fellow MNs to contribute fitting captions). I'll start this month and next month I will publish one of **YOUR** photos in the newsletter. Remember send your silly photo to Kathi Mestayer at kwren@widomaker.com



What do you think the caption for this photo should say?

Send your ideas to Kathi Mestayer.
kwren@widomaker.com

Answers will be published in next month's newsletter.

Wildflower of the Month – April 2014

John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

Arrowwood Viburnum

Viburnum dentatum

This shrub has many stems, growing 6-8 feet tall with erect-arching stems in a loose, round habit. White, flat-topped flower clusters appear in late spring, followed by dark blue berries, very attractive to birds and butterflies. Lustrous, dark-green foliage turns yellow to wine-red in fall. Arrowwood Viburnum is distinctive for the wide, pointed leaves, coarsely toothed and downy twigs.

Easily grown in average, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade the plant will tolerate clay soil. Winter hardy, a vigorous and reliable grower, it can be planted as a hedge or screen. Arrowwood Viburnum is scattered throughout Virginia, and ranges from Maine south to Florida and Texas, mainly on the Coastal Plain. The plant blooms March through April and the fruits appear July through September.

The Spring Azure Butterfly lays its eggs in the flowers which also furnishes nectar to the adult butterfly. Fruits are eaten by many songbirds.

For more information about native plants visit www.claytonvnps.org.

By Helen Hamilton, past-president of the John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

Photo: Arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*) taken by Jan Newton



Insect of the Month

Spring Azure

Celastrina ladon

A lovely little blue butterfly, the Spring Azure (*Celastrina ladon*) is one of the first signs of spring, feeding on native flowering woody shrubs, and finding nectar in dogbane, common milkweed, dandelion, and many other herbs throughout the summer. With much variation in color patterns, typically the upperside is blue, and the females have some black at the outer edge of the forewing. The underside hindwing is gray-white with various black markings.

These butterflies lay their eggs on the flower buds of native dogwood, viburnum, New Jersey tea and blueberries, and the caterpillars feed on the flowers and fruits. The chrysalis then hibernates, emerging in March and producing several broods through spring and early summer. Good hibernating locations for butterflies and moths are wood piles, compost heaps with lots of leaves, standing vegetation, brush piles.

C. ladon is actually a complex of several species which taxonomists have yet to agree upon. Experts are currently attempting to distinguish among Holly Azure (*C. idella*), Summer Azure (*C. neglecta*) and the species which appears first in the spring, known as Spring Azure (*C. ladon*). The website of “Butterflies and Moths of North America” (BAMONA) (www.butterfliesandmoths.org) collects sightings, photographs and information about these species all over the country, and lists those that have been officially recorded in each locale.

Photograph of Spring Azure Butterfly taken by Teta Kain



Note: The articles on “Plant of the Month” and “Insect of the Month” were provided by Helen Hamilton via Susan Powell

The Way To A Woman's Heart

By Mike Woodward, Cohort VIII

Deb can often be found in the natural area behind our house - spending time observing nature and just enjoying the sights and sounds that a suburban oasis provides.

It is a short walk to the best observation areas but there are few natural "sit-upons" there and Deb would often "tote" a lawn chair "into the woods". Deb didn't seem to mind this but I did notice this inconvenience.

While reading the January Issue of **The Naturalist** – **The monthly newsletter of the Historic Rivers Chapter**, I noticed the article on building a Leopold bench (submitted by Joanne Sheffield).

<http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/build-a-leopold-bench>

Being a very amateur woodworker, I remember saying to myself, "...with Valentine's Day coming up, I think Deb would like a bench like this and this would be a useful and unique gift." So off to Lowes I went, with plans in hand.

Constructing the bench really is as easy as the video looks. Just as with any project, it just took a little planning and, of course, using the right tools. Using my table saw made the wood cutting very easy.



Don't tell Deb but all of the materials – wood, bolts and screws - cost me less than \$35. I would guess the entire project took me only two hours.

But, I wasn't done with the just the construction of the bench. Remembering this was a Valentine's Day gift, I wanted to make the bench a little more special. So, using a simple dremel tool and a router attachment, I set out to carve a special Valentine's Day message in the bench. I think that turned out well. (See the following picture).



After nearly 34 years together, I know the way to Deb's heart. It's not the gift but the thought and the effort that make the difference.



NOTES FROM THE WILDSIDE— BY RAMBLIN CLYDE

A Birder's Wacky Week In Suburbia

There was an old TV show called TW3 (That Was The Week That Was) and this last week was it.

It started out on Monday morning at 6:30 (and each successive morning since). When I went out to retrieve my newspaper I was greeted by a cacophony of sound: my front yard Cardinal singing, the pete-pete of the Tufted Titmice, The neighborhood Robins adding their two cents, our Mocking Bird sitting atop the street light imitating everyone. Suddenly there was an ear splitting sound above my head. Our Carolina Wren takes his turn. I can't believe how anything that small can be so-o-o loud. Geoff says he believes they are so loud because they are hard of hearing.

When I went in for my morning coffee and enjoying the birds at the kitchen window feeding stations I noticed a burst of color in my azaleas. It looked like fireflies twinkling. I got my binoculars out and couldn't believe my eyes. The flashes of yellow was the gold crown of my Golden Crowned Kinglet flitting around in the greenery. As he is darting around all you can see are these bursts of color.

For those of you who have not visited our home, my yard is typical suburbia with the homes within 30 feet of each other. I worked at improving habitat and during the last three GBBCs I recorded 29 species of birds. The only species I have not seen in our area are our beloved Blue Birds. This changed this wacky week with a pair visiting the feeding station three times so far. I like to think it was Ma Nature's way of thanking me for the two years of BB monitoring at NN Park three miles down the road.

This unusual week ended Sunday night as Ellie & I were returning home at twilight(5:30 pm). I spotted a large Red Shouldered Hawk tearing a squirrel's nest apart in a neighbor's Loblolly. It captured the squirrel and flew away. As we watched this drama Ellie asked me what was the big bird sitting above our heads in the Willow Oak. It was a beautiful "Sharpie" sitting quietly as his cousin caught supper.

A quick update on the Zoo. With the assistance of Stephanie Schmuck, Geoff Giles, Lew Dillion (Peninsula Chapter), and Suzanne Masten (Cohort 8) we brought the Zoo to all of Grafton Bethel's 1st grade classes. This week we will be working with GBs 2nd grade classes. Patty Riddick will be assisting. There is still an open invitation to Cohort 8 to visit and observe.

Wednesday April 2 Rm 98 09:15-10:45

Friday April 4 Rm 98 09:15-10:45

If any HRC, VMNs are interested, the Zoo be visiting the Hilton Women's Club in NN on Friday April 18 from 10 to 11am. There will be approx. 30-40 women attending and I could use two VMNs to pass around the animals.

Also the Zoo is scheduled to attend the Newsome Park ES Community Fair in NN South East section on Saturday April 26 from 11A to 2P. This will be a static display with the Zoo Cru answering question about the animals. These children have little or no experience with nature.

Please let me know if anyone can help.

Ramblin Clyde

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Continuing Education (formerly known as Advanced Training) for April 2014

Lucy Manning, Continuing Education Chair (757-646-0877 lucymnng@gmail.com)

Remember to go to our chapter's calendar for all event details! http://www.historicrivers.org/?page_id=1246

[\[CE\]VMN Webinar: Synergies for Biodiversity Awareness and Conservation](#) - April 14, 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

[\[CE\] Birding on the Boardwalk](#) - April 15, 7:15 am to 8:30 am at VLM

[\[CE\] Archaeology Dig Days](#) - April 16, all day at New Quarter Park, Lakeshead Drive, Williamsburg

[\[CE\] WBC Monthly Meeting](#) - April 16, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm at College of William & Mary, Andrews Hall, Room 101

[\[CE\] Archaeology Dig Days](#) - April 17, all day at New Quarter Park, Lakeshead Drive, Williamsburg

[\[CE\] Flying Wild Workshop](#) - April 18, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm, Tabb Library Meeting Rm, 100 Long Green Blvd, Yorktown

[\[CE\] WBC Field Trip](#) - April 19, 7:00 am to 1:30 pm at WBC Field Trip

[\[CE\] All About Herbs](#) - April 19, 10:00 am to 11:30 am at Freedom Park, Centerville Road, Williamsburg

[\[CE\] Wildlife Mapping Class](#) - April 19, 11:00 am to 3:30 pm at James City County Library, Croaker Road, Williamsburg

[\[CE\] Wildlife Mapping - Outdoor Portion](#) - April 19, 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm at York River State Park, Williamsburg

[\[CE\] HRBC Bird Walk](#) - April 20, 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

[\[CE\] Barrels and Bins](#) - April 20, 10:00 am to 11:30 am, Williamsburg Botanical Garden, Centerville Rd, Williamsburg

[\[CE\] William and Mary Wildflower Refuge Walk](#) - April 20, 1 to 3:00 pm near Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Landrum Drive, Williamsburg

[\[CE\] WBC Bird Walk](#) - April 26, 7:00 am to 9:00 am at New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., Williamsburg

[\[CE\] RiverTrends & Save Our Streams Water Quality Monitoring Training](#) - April 26, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at York River State Park

[\[CE\] HRBC Bird Walk](#) - May 4, 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

[\[CE\] HRC Field Trip \(nearly full\)](#) - May 8, all day at Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Swamp Road, Sunbury, NC

[\[CE\] HRC Field Trip \(nearly full\)](#) - May 9, all day at Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Swamp Road, Sunbury, NC

[\[CE\] WBC Bird Walk at New Quarter Park](#) - May 10, 8:00 am to 10:00 am at New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., Williamsburg

[\[CE\] Monthly meeting](#) - May 14, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at JCC Human Services Bldg., 5249 Olde Towne Rd., Williamsburg

[\[CE\] Spring Wildflower Symposium](#) - May 16 -17, all day at Wintergreen Resort 39 Mountain Inn Loop, Roseland, VA

[\[CE\] WBC Field Trip](#) - May 17, 7:00 am to 1:30 pm at WBC Field Trip

[\[CE\] Nature Photography with Ken Conger](#) - May 17, 7:30 am to 3:00 pm at Virginia Living Museum

[\[CE\] Bluebirds in our Gardens](#) - May 17, 10 to 11:30 am at Freedom Park, Centerville Road, Williamsburg