



THE NATURALIST

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

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 8 No. 5 May 2014

Chapter Board of Directors 2014-2015

Officers

Shirley Devan, President

Patty Maloney, Past President

Linda Morse, Vice President

*Nancy Barnhart and Ginny Carey
Co-Secretaries*

Cheryl Jacobson, Treasurer

*Janet Curtis, Tom Dougherty, Les Lawrence,
Clyde Marsteller, Joanne Sheffield
Members-at-Large*

Mary Apperson, Chapter Advisor

Committee Chairs

*Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscoll
Historians*

Judy Jones, Publicity & Outreach

Roger Gosden, Basic Training

Mike Woodward, Membership

Jan Lockwood, Volunteer Service Projects

Lucy Manning, Continuing Education

Linda Morse, Programs

Deb Woodward, Newsletter

Sherry Brubaker, Host

Dean Shostak, Field Trip Coordinator

Membership Committee Report

By Mike Woodward, new Membership Committee Chair

The Hours continue to grow....

Recently, Clyde Marsteller and Nancy Barnhart were recognized for reaching important milestones in their volunteering efforts. Nancy has logged in 500 volunteer hours, while Clyde has now booked 1,000 hours.

When you see these busy and very productive VMNs, make sure you congratulate them on their efforts and these significant achievements.

Don't forget to log in your own Volunteer and Continuing Education hours in the VMN Volunteer Management System (<https://virginiamn.volunteersystem.org>). Contact Mike at woodwardsm@cox.net if you need any help.



Trivia Question of the Month:

What bird lays the smallest eggs in comparison to the mother's size?

Answer on Page 15

President's Message

By Shirley Devan

Participating in Wildlife Mapping at York River State Park is like hanging around the proverbial water cooler at the office on Monday mornings. It just so happened that this morning's get together at YRSP was a Monday, and I realized that the six of us gathered in the parking lot sharing our weekend's wild outdoor adventures were hanging around the "water cooler" before we started our work – Wildlife Mapping on the Taskinas Trail.

One of the things that Master Naturalists enjoy as much as exploring the natural world is telling other naturalists all about it. "Sharing" is so much a part of why we enjoy being naturalists. While our spouses and friends may not revel in our finds, we know that our fellow naturalists will be as excited as we are about the eastern rat snake hanging around the compost pile or the flying squirrel in the bluebird box.

At each of our meetings (board meetings and general membership meetings) we try to set aside some time for sharing – while we enjoy great refreshments provided by volunteers (thank you very much!).

To encourage more sharing among HRC members, I am hoping you will share with me your "natural" observations and I will send them to the newsletter editor each month.

I may be opening a can of earthworms (or is it night crawlers?), but I'm willing to give it a go. Plus I love hearing about your finds.

Here are a few guidelines. I reserve the right to add more "guidelines" later.

1. Please share flora and fauna observations from the Coastal Plain of Virginia only. We all know where this is, right? Your note should be 1-2 sentences.
2. Please include the date and location of the observation, the identity of the object, and your name. If your email does not contain these 4 things, I can almost promise that I won't use it. (Please do not ask me to ID a fuzzy photo of a moth.)
3. Please send only one photo per observation. Not necessary to send a photo but many HRC members can't resist.

Start the subject line of the email with "Sharing" and send to me at: sedevan52@cox.net

1. I will keep track of the observations and photos and send them along to Deb Woodward for next month's newsletter. Because of space, I may not send Deb every photo. They may go to the HRC Flickr site or web site.

If I get too many photos and too many "observations" for the month, I reserve the right to edit what I send to the newsletter.

PLEASE NOTE: This does NOT take the place of your essays, trip reports, event announcements, project reports and all the wonderful "stuff" you send Deb each month for the newsletter.

This is meant to give you the opportunity to share the wonders of your world without filling up everyone's email inbox. Let me know if you have questions or suggestions. We'll see how this experiment works. Please "share" and thanks in advance!

Notes from the Board

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

©2014 Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist Program. No parts of this newsletter may be reproduced without permission of the Board of Directors of the Historic Rivers Chapter. Contact: deb.woodward3@gmail.com.

Virginia Master Naturalist programs are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital, family, or veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

Wildlife Mapping Team Earns York County Volunteer of the Year Award

Article by Sara Lewis

Cherie Aukland (center) received the 2013 Volunteer of the Year Award from York County on Tuesday night, April 15, at the York County Board of Supervisors meeting on behalf of the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists Wildlife Mapping Team. Members of the team have been trained to count the numbers and species of wildlife by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to help the agency by being more eyes and ears on the ground, working as citizen sciences.



Jan Lockwood, Cherie Aukland, Shirley Devan. Photo by Sara Lewis

By counting wildlife, VDGIF is better able to maintain optimum numbers of wildlife to balance the health and safety of people and property.

Cherie Aukland and Susan Powell established New Quarter as a wildlife mapping site and spent many hours at the computer setting up the database. Cheryl Jacobson took over as wildlife mapping leader and now Jan Lockwood spearheads the New Quarter

project. A number of other Master

Naturalists have joined them each week and park visitors are also welcome to come with them.

New Quarter Park's Wildlife Mappers were nominated as York County Volunteers of the Year for the work they do to make York County a better place for people and wildlife to live side by side. They spread enthusiasm to New Quarter Park visitors about safely observing wildlife in the unique variety of habitats at the park.

Gotta love those frogs!! By Kathi Mestayer

A couple of times in the past week, I made the mistake of pulling the black-and-white golf umbrella we keep by the door off its hook and pushing the button to open it. Ping! Out pops a little frog onto the lawn. So I pick up the frog and set it down in the plants by the lily "pond" (old whisky barrel with plastic lining. Very attractive).

After that happened a couple of times, I notified my husband, Mac, that we would not be using that umbrella for the rest of the summer, being that it had been colonized by a frog. Yesterday, a really, really loud frog call woke me from my nap. Seriously. So, I peeked into the folds of the umbrella, and there were two dappled-grey frogs inside.

But I needed to i.d. them in order to enter the data into my Wildlife Mapping account. I rummaged through the wildlife guides on my shelf, and found "A guide to Frogs and Toads of Virginia." It had nice photos of the gray tree frog and the Cope's gray tree frog, and said they are "virtually indistinguishable." But....there is a CD in the back of the guide with their

calls on it, so I downloaded it and played both frogs. Bingo! Cope's! But last week one of the frogs that flew out onto the lawn was green. Gotta i.d. that one next.



Yorktown Elementary Field Trip a Sunny Success

Story and Photos by Sara Lewis

The weather was beautiful for the approximately 125 first graders who visited New Quarter Park on Thursday, April 24. Presentations by Master Naturalists insured that a great time was had by all.

Clyde Marstellar and Pam Camblin took the kids on a trip to the Zoo in Clyde's Shopping Bags.

Sherry Brubaker and Nancy Gore gave them lots of tips for reducing, reusing, and recycling the environment.



Sara Lewis and Lucy Manning asked the important questions to help the kids solve the mystery of the lying logs.

And Jan Lockwood and Cheryl Jacobsen taught everyone about our feathered friends, the bluebirds and osprey.

Geoff Giles and Judy Jones kept the class groups on schedule as they visited all of the presenters and enjoyed a break on the playground.

New Quarter Park sends a big **THANK YOU** to Historic Rivers Chapter Master Naturalists for making it all possible for these lucky Yorktown Elementary School first graders.

SIGHTINGS!!



Glossy Ibis in our area are rare enough. When their cousin the White-faced Ibis lands in a muddy field across from the horse farm on Greensprings Road, it is a MAJOR event.

In the photo, the White-faced Ibis is on the left. Note red legs, red eye completely surrounded by skin. A Glossy Ibis is on the right.

By Shirley Devan



Green Heron and Canada Geese, Greensprings

By Hart Haynes



Our birding team found this bee swarm in the wild yesterday while doing the Spring Count. I've advised Roger Gosden! Shirley Devan



HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Thanks to the eagle eyes of Shirley Devan in finding this Great Horned Owl nest at Jamestown Island, we were all given the treat of a month-long look at an owlet's growth. Shirley spotted the adult female owl sitting on a branch with a large snake dangling from its talons. She watched patiently and was rewarded when it flew into its nearby nest thus giving us the fun of a rare opportunity to watch this baby grow. Photos by Nancy Barnhart



Owlet, April 2, 2014.

Growing fast.



An attentive mother kept her eye on us.



The morning of fledging, April 27, 2014.



April 27, 2014. Getting ready to go. Mother and owlet were gone by the end of the day.

York County Sports Complex Bluebird Trail

By Stephanie Schmuck and Susie Engle

In the mild winter of 2013 the thought of a new bluebird trail in York County was quietly mentioned, and hesitantly suggested, and then left to incubate in the subconscious for another year. Then, in the bitter cold of winter, 2014, the ever enthusiastic blue birders gathered to discuss the coming bluebird season and two avid trail monitors decided to start their own trail at the York County Sports Complex.



Trail leaders Stephanie and Susie

This new endeavor was reminiscent of the life of a bluebird. It started with an idea, like an egg, and it took some time to incubate (thankfully bluebirds do not incubate for a year). Finally, when the idea hatched, we felt quite lost and helpless, and if it wasn't for the gentle mothering of Jan Lockwood and the nudging of nestlings to keep the idea growing and moving forward the idea might have died. Instead we were fed with all the bluebird boxes, poles, baffles and labels that we would need. Luckily, we also had an enthusiastic County contact, Amy Rowley, who granted us permission faster than we imagined that gave us the final push out of the nest.

An afternoon of repairs to boxes, some pounding on poles to straighten and release the anchor

rods, and we were ready to set up the trail. The Schmuck Family and Susie Engle spent a delightful April afternoon swinging a sledge hammer, putting up 12 boxes. It was so satisfying to see it all come together. Our trail fledged on April 13, 2014.



First box up

We checked the boxes a week later, to discover the beginnings of a chickadee nest, a partial bluebird nest, and a complete bluebird nest. By week 2 we had a complete chickadee nest with 6 eggs, the bluebird nest had 3 eggs and there was another complete bluebird nest and partial bluebird nest. There were 5 boxes with some sort of activity after only 2 weeks of being up. By week 3 we have another active nest with 4 bluebird eggs and our first bluebird nest now has 5 eggs. Hopefully by week 5 we will have our first babies!

Our bluebird trail has taken flight and we can't wait to see how many lives begin with us. Some more boxes on a new trail will be going up soon at Grafton Bethel Elementary School.

A huge "Thank you!" to Jan Lockwood for all her help, guidance, and sourcing of materials; Dan Cristol for providing boxes, poles and baffles from William and Mary; Kathy Cross for sharing boxes from the Chickahominy Riverfront trail; Jim Booth for building us some lovely new boxes; Stephen Living for providing labels years before this idea was even conceived; Amy Rowley and her staff at the York County Sports Complex for working with us to make this trail happen; and to family and friends who helped us swing a sledgehammer and supported another wild adventure.



Susie and the sledgehammer



Chris and the sledgehammer



First Bluebird Eggs



First Chickadee Eggs

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Photos from some recent activities:



New Kent Forestry Center April 28. Christina Woodson. Photo by Judy Jones



Left to right: Jan Lockwood, Joanne Sheffield and Shirley Devan staff exhibit April 9 at the Colonial Heritage Flower and Garden Show.



Wildlife Mapping Training. Above: Ruth and Dean Gordon, Judy Tucker. Below: Crowd



Wildlife Mapping,, YRSP, April 7 Les Lawrence; Gary Driscoll, Deane Gordon, Nancy Barnhart, Felice Bond. Photo by Judy Jones



Wildlife Mapping Training. Photos by Judy Jones



James River Fest, May 3. Eco Discovery Park. Mike Woodward, Kathi Cross, Sharon Falconer, Suzanne Masten. Photo by Judy Jones.



Outdoor Exposition—Eco Discovery Park, May 10. Shirley Devan, Deb Woodward, Lucy Manning and unknown child with parental permission. Photo by Judy Jones.



Frog Walk, April 19. Felice Bond and crowd. Photo by Judy Jones

What a Great Story!!!

The Prothonotary Warbler that has been nesting in my yard for three years has returned. However, he has chosen a different nesting site. He visits daily and comes very close, sitting on the porch with me. The other day I had left the door open. I did not realize he had flown in until dinner time when I heard him singing. For sure, I thought I was crazy. When I heard him again I went into the living room and there he was on my lamp. I moved very, very slowly, opened the windows and coaxed him out.



1st two photos of Inge's guest inside her house.



I was worried about him, it must have been a stressful experience. I did not see him the next day, however, he was back yesterday and sang no more than three feet away from me.

Story and photos by Inge Curtis



Back outside singing!

NOTES FROM THE WILDSIDE— BY RAMBLIN CLYDE

Mimicry In Our Butterflies

As Master Naturalists we were taught in Entomology about the mimicry involving the Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) and the Viceroy Butterfly (*Limenitis archippus*). They were represented as the classic example of Batesian mimicry – where a harmless organism, for its own protection, resembles a poisonous or otherwise dangerous organism. It was long surmised that the palatable Viceroy mimicked the unpalatable Monarch using the latter's bright colors to protect itself from predators. This particular mimicry is also called Aposomatic Behavior where the coloration of certain distasteful or poisonous animals is characterized by bright conspicuous markings, which predators learn to recognize and avoid.

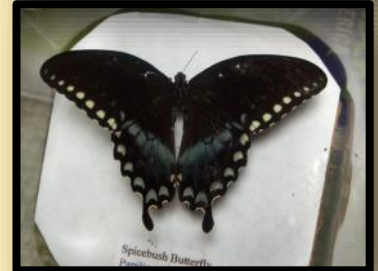
The Monarch's caterpillar host plant is Milkweed (*Asclepias*) which contains cardiac glycosides. They accumulate in the caterpillar and are then transferred to the butterfly form. For you wild flower buffs this chemical is similar to *Digitalis* found in Fox-glove.

In 1991 two Zoologists David Ritand and Lincoln Bower challenged the assumptions of the Monarch-Viceroy relationship by suggesting that the Viceroy was also poisonous and used its bright colors as a warning of the fact. A previous 1958 study by Zoologist Jane Van Zant Bower, found that the Viceroy caterpillars feed on Willow and Poplar trees that produce bitter tasting salicyclic acid (think aspirin) to deter herbivores from munching on them. She also found that the Viceroy, along with tasting nasty and being unpalatable to predators, release toxic Phenolic Glycosides when they are attacked.

The researchers proposed a new theory on the butterflies' relationship. They believe it is an example of Mullerian Mimicry – where two unrelated nasty tasting organisms resemble one another and as each interact in the same environment start to mimic each other to increase the benefits each exhibit. As the Army says they get more “bang for their bucks”. This brings up an interesting conjecture – could the Monarch be actually mimicking the Viceroy?

There is another more amazing example of Batesian Mimicry – tasty butterflies imitating foul tasting and poisonous ones.

The Pipevine Swallowtail (*Battus philenor*) caterpillar feeds on the Pipevine plant (*Aristolochia*). Pipevine contains Aristolochic acids which accumulate in the caterpillar and are transferred to the adult butterfly (sounds familiar) This acid is highly toxic, Many species of local butterflies mimic the dark colored Pipevine Swallowtail including the dark morph form of the female Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*), both sexes of the Spicebush Swallowtail (*P. troilus*), both sexes of the Black Swallowtail (*P. polyxenes*), both sexes of the sympatric subspecies the Red-spotted Purple (*Limenitis arthemis*) and the female Diana Fritillary (*Speyeria diana*). It is again interesting to note that dimorphism in *P. glaucus* and *S. diana* exists only in the females leading one to speculate that the interaction between these two species with *B. philenor* is relatively recent as compared to the other species where both sexes over time have taken on the color and general form if the Pipevine Swallowtail.



Diana Fritillary (*Speyeria diana*)

MORE NOTES FROM THE WILDSIDE!

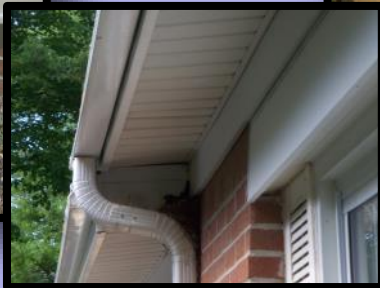
By Clyde Marsteller

My butterfly count here in Denbigh (37.149960 -76.517224) has been a Purple, a Black Swallowtail, a Spring Blue, a Comma and several Cabbage Butterflies (remember the females have two black spots on their forewings)

The bird scene is hopping with nesting Cardinals, Titmice, Carolina Wrens, Robins.



Carolina Wren chicks in drawer



Robin in nest under eaves



Titmouse Nest



Cardinal Nest

There is a nesting pair of Brown Thrashers somewhere in my dwarf hollies and a pair of Catbirds and a House Wren have showed up in the backyard.

When I took the Carolina Wren photo the parents were flying around my head and screaming loud calls. The commotion brought the front yard Brown Thrasher and the Cat Birds into the melee. I retreated rather hurriedly.

One of the chrysalises I saved last fall from my herb garden has hatched. As I tell the children in the Zoo presentation, once an adult insect has wings it does not grow any larger. Why a miniature Black Swallowtail?

The caterpillars were feeding on scraps of dill before the frost hit. There was just enough food to produce "stunted" adults. They look like miniature jewels.

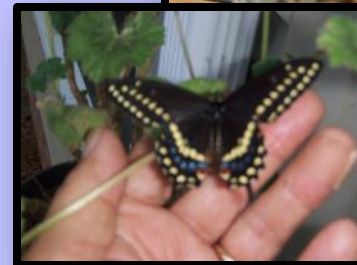
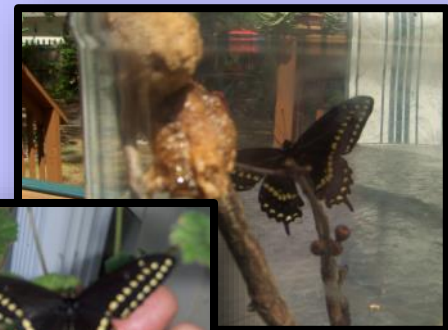


Miss Terry and Jacob

Terry and Jacob have obviously gotten together again. The problem is that Jacob is on the bottom! I must have a talk with that turtle.

G3A has yielded two beautiful snakes for the JCC Junior Master Gardeners

on May 7 at Freedom Park and Hampton Roads Academy 1st grades on May 8th. They are a juvenile Rough Green Snake and a very large Rough Earth Snake. They will be released after the presentations.



1. Black Swallowtail emerging from chrysalis. Note Amen's egg mass next to it.
2. Stunted growth butterfly.

Ramblin Clyde

Butterfly Project

Host Planting

It is finally time to plant butterfly host and nectar plants! The long winter is behind us, and we need to get plants in the ground. If you have plants or seedlings to offer, now is the time to let us know.

We have collected plants from several sources. The John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society donated a number of plants after the plant sale. Their Plant Rescue Team also collected plants for our use. The Herbarium at the College of William & Mary donated a few milkweed plants. A number of individuals offered plants and germinated seeds to donate to the cause.



Several public locations are on the list to receive butterfly plants: York River State Park, Little Creek Reservoir, the Warhill Tract, and Chickahominy River Front Park. Members have started a garden project at Chickahominy RFP and will be planting some host and nectar plants. We will meet with John White at the Warhill Tract to designate the planting spot(s) and where the path through the field will be mowed. Help will be needed for planting especially at Warhill, so please let us know if you can help.

Sightings

A few weeks ago, spring butterflies such as Orangetip Falcates, Azures, Henry's Elfins, and Juvenal's Duskywing were observed in several locations. Also a number of common species appeared including Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Zebra Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail, Clouded and Orange Sulphurs, Silver-spotted skipper, Eastern-tailed Blue, Pearl Crescent, Cabbage White, and Horace's Duskywing. We even had a relatively rare butterfly sighting... a Palamedes Swallowtail on Jamestown Island.

Thank you everyone for your photos and reports! Please keep track of the first dates of your observations.



For those of you wishing to participate in this summer's regional butterfly counts, here are some projected dates and local websites that you may want to visit.

The Chippokes Count may be on Sunday July 13, organized by Teta Kain.

<http://www.cvwo.org/calendar.php> The butterfly count is set for July 19.

http://www.fws.gov/refuge/great_dismal_swamp/ Don Schwab set the date for July 26 .

<http://www.historicrivers.org> Our Williamsburg Count is set for August 9th, but it's not on the website yet.

If you have any questions, let me know. Adrienne adrienne-gary@cox.net

We look forward to seeing you.

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

First Anthropomorphfest Caption Contest Results! By Kathi Mestayer

As I suspected, we certainly have some creative and/or goofy members in our Chapter. Here are the critter photos and their suggested captions:



"Go-Go McSnail" has done it again... with his house balanced on his shoulders he has single-handedly and effortlessly advanced towards the finish line in record speed!" - Maria Meyers

"For crying out loud how else did you expect me to find my way back home?" - Clyde Marsteller

"Dottie just doing her thing." - Maria Meyers

"Slime mold always gives me the hiccups!" - Kathi Mestayer

"Tough choice between the fish filet and the fries!!!" - Geoff Giles

"We've just got to get off this roller coaster diet!" - Sherry Brubaker

"My brother's a McNugget." - Pete Stahl*

"Burger Birds Browsing for the Beef" - Andy McGlamery*

"If we both lift at the same time. . . "

- Dave Shantz*
"I'll race you for the fries!" Shirley Devan

* a couple of the entries are from non-MNs, but I thought they had merit.



"Does this make me look fat?" - Ginny Carey

"I can't believe I got it at a consignment shop!" - Kathi Mestayer

"I'm breaking out my Fall collection" George Keene*

What birds?" - Shirley Devan

"I'm not going to live here; I'm just flipping it." - Kathi Mestayer



Silly Captions continued:

Sherry Brubaker took this photo in the visitor center at the Great Dismal Swamp and thinks we should use it for next month's silly captions!!



Remember—send your silly photo and/or captions to Kathi Mestayer at kwren@widomaker.com

Answer to the Trivia Question of the Month:

The ostrich. Although an ostrich egg at 3 pounds is the heaviest egg laid by any living bird, it is only about 1.5 percent of its mother's weight. By contrast a house wren's egg is about 13 percent of its mother's weight. Provided by Sherry Brubaker

Highlights of Wildlife Mapping at
Jamestown Island, April 2014

By Nancy Barnhart

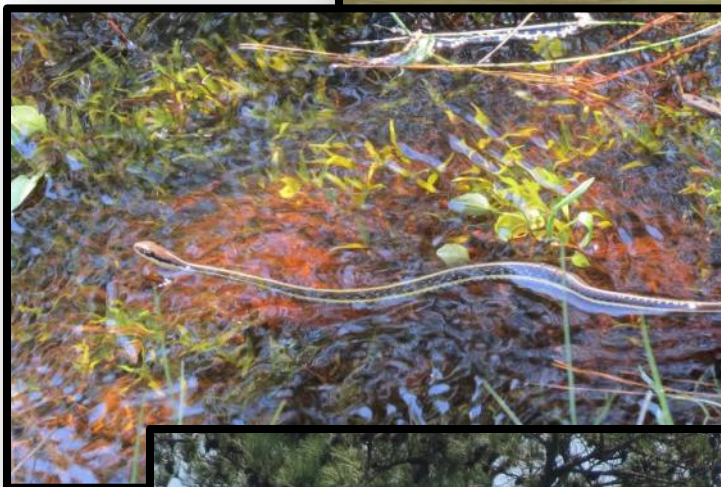


Black-and-white Warbler



Snapping Turtle carrying
small load

Ribbon Snake



Palamedes Swallowtail



Eaglets growing fast

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER

Continuing Education for May+ 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] Spring Wildflower Symposium - **May 16-18, 2014** all day at Wintergreen Resort 39 Mountain Inn Loop, Roseland, VA
Plant Sale, May 17-18

[CE] "Black Lights and Bugs" - **May 17**, 8:00-10:00 pm at New Quarter Park

[CE] Nature Photography with Ken Conger - **May 17**, 7:30 am to 3:00 pm at Virginia Living Museum, J Clyde Morris Boulevard, Newport News.

[CE] Bluebirds in our Gardens - **May 17**, 10:00 am to 11:30 am at Freedom Park, Centerville Road, Williamsburg.

[CE] HRBC Bird Walk - **May 18**, 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

[CE] WBC Monthly Meeting - **May 21**, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm at College of William & Mary, Andrews Hall, Room 101.

[CE] WBC Bird Walk - **May 24**, 7:00 am to 9:00 am at New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr., Williamsburg

[CE] John Clayton Chapter: Deer Park Plant Walk - **May 25**, 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm at Deer Park, 11523 Jefferson Avenue,
Newport News

[CE] Black Light and Owls - **May 31**, 7:00 pm to 12:00 am at VCU Rice Rivers Center, Charles City County

[CE] Black Lights and Owls - **June 1, 2014** all day at VCU Rice Rivers Center, Charles City County

[CE] HRBC Bird Walk - **June 1, 2014** from 7:00 am to 10:00 am at Newport News City Park

[CE] John Clayton Chapter: Sandy Bottom Plant Walk - **June 8**, 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm at 1255 Big Bethel Road, Hampton

[CE] Monthly meeting - **June 11**, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at JCC Human Services Bldg., 5249 Olde Towne Rd., Williamsburg

[CE] WBC Bird Walk at New Quarter Park - **June 14**, 8:00 am to 10:00 am at New Quarter Park, 1000 Lakeshead Dr.