

The Naturalist

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FROM THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER
VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

Virginia
Master
Naturalist



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The President's Message

By Adrienne Frank



American Snout, New Quarter Park
Photo by Shirley Devan



Summer Azure, Ancarrow's Landing, Richmond
Photo by Shirley Devan

It's been my pleasure to participate on the Nominating Committee with our Past President Judy Jones, Shirley Devan, Karen Grass, and Rick Ricklin. It was delightful to learn about chapter members as board nominees, their skills, and all of the activities in their busy lives. The new members will bring leadership, creativity, and motivation to the board. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing board members, some of them who have served more than one two-year term. Each one contributed a great deal to our chapter and will be greatly missed. Outgoing board members will be a considerable loss, because after two or more years of service, their knowledge and skills will be hard to replace.

Sue Mutell, Secretary – In addition to recording well-written and precise minutes, Sue has been our informal Parliamentarian. She's been a great timekeeper and has kept us on task and in accordance with the bylaws.

David Lunt, Basic Training – David has incredible organizing and mentoring skills. He has devoted voluminous hours to facilitate the BT Committee, organize the materials, prepare the new cohort members for each class, set up and solve problems with the audiovisuals, and much more.

Renee Dallman, Membership – Renee's lighthearted and glorious personality made presenting member milestones a delight. During Annual Report time, she used her skill and problem solving skills to answer all those membership questions.

Randi Heise, Host – Randi was an outstanding organizer and creative leader. She recruited and supported numerous members for refreshments, raffles, and the many tasks for the picnics and holiday parties (i.e., setup/cleanup, food, games, and lots more).

Maud Ann Wilson & Barb Bucklin, Field Trips – Maud Ann and Barb enthusiastically carried out marvelous field trips over the last two years. Each was outstanding learning and fun, and each had a great restaurant meal with opportunity for lots of social interaction.

Alister Perkinson, Sharon Plocher, Gary Driscoll were Members-at-Large – Although Member-at-Large does not require a lot of specific board tasks, the position is valuable for other reasons, especially using the skills of previous board or committee members or introducing a new member to the workings of the board. Sharon has contributed years on the Basic Training Committee and provided the board with her insights. Alister was able to give us insight into the working of JCC Parks and Recreation and his local experiences. Gary contributed to our knowledge of native plants, gardening, and more.

On behalf of the entire HRC Board, we thank you for your service. You make our chapter great!

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Juvenile Eagle Photo by Judy Jones

Chapter Board

Chapter Advisor	John Gresham
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
Liaison to the State	Susan Powell

Proposed Board Members 2019-2020

Chapter Advisor	John Gresham
President	Adrienne Frank
Vice-President	Linda Morse
Secretaries (co-chairs)	Betty Bennick, Connie Reitz
Treasurer	Barbara Neis
Volunteer Projects Chair	Shirley Devan
Basic Training (co-chairs)	Janet Harper, Karen Grass
Membership Chair	Rick Brown
Continuing Ed Chair	Jennifer Trevino
Education and Outreach (co-chairs)	Sherry Brubaker, Frank Smith Lark Smith
Historian and Publicity	Keith Navia
Host Chair	Cindy Baker
Newsletter Chair	Lisa Reagan
Field Trips (co-chairs)	Dean Shostak, Ginny Broome
Members-at-Large	Glenda White, Joe Beene
Past President	Judy Jones
Liaison to the State	Susan Powell
Risk Management Team	Roger Gosden, Patty Maloney



Shirley Devan a Renaissance Baby Boomer

By Shirley Devan

By every definition I'm a baby boomer.

I was fortunate to grow up in a small town in Virginia in the 1950s. By small, I mean only about 1,000 people. When I was old enough to ride a bike, I rambled all over our little town of Clarksville, the only town on the shore of Buggs Island Lake, on the border with North Carolina in the south-central portion of the state.

We lived "in town" (versus "out in the country") and most of the town and my friends were within a mile of my house—even though a mile seemed like quite a distance to me.

How I survived the 1950s I'll never know. No bike helmets. No sunscreen. No bike lanes—we rode on the sidewalks and no one cared. No seat belts in cars. I shared a room with my sister until I went to college. Only one bathroom in our house that we shared with my grandmother and grandfather.

My parents were not helicopter parents. No need—everyone in town knew all the children, where we lived, and who our parents were. Until the 7th grade I walked a quarter mile to school and even rode my bike some days. My second-grade teacher lived across the street from me. Not only did she teach me, she taught my father in elementary school. I realize now I enjoyed a safe and protected childhood in this little town.

THE WILLIAM & MARY YEARS

After high school—one of only two in our county—I was fortunate enough to get into William & Mary. Many years later I realized that I benefited from William & Mary's concerted efforts to recruit students from more rural areas. Five seniors in my class ended up at W&M—remarkable for a small, rural high school. Four graduated in four years.

I had to study hard and long at W&M. Looking back now, I wish that I could have majored in biology. But back then (early 70's) W&M biology classes were dominated by pre-med students. With my weak high school science, I could not survive in such a competitive environment. I was much more adept at reading and writing and that's what I did for four years—English and history.

Believe it or not, English and history prepared me for W&M's MBA program. In the late 70s, the Business School worked to recruit more women for the MBA program. My ability to read and write complete sentences carried me a long way. I actually enjoyed statistics and economics, which are valuable tools for me in today's world. "Follow the money!"

CAREER

I spent most of my working career as a training operations manager for a small government contractor specializing in

The first time I met Shirley Devan was on a very cold, cold—and I mean COLD—January 1st in 2012. It was the annual 'First Birdwalk of the Year' walk on the bridge at Greensprings Trail. Shirley was red-cheeked and bundled up tightly but just having one heck of a great time. I was so impressed by her knowledge, her friendliness, and her fortitude. She stayed despite the cold, encouraging the new birders such as myself to look, listen, and try to ID some of our avian buddies hanging nearby. Shirley made sure I was able to see them and then helped me to understand how to know which bird was which. I wasn't to become a Master Naturalist for another 18 months but her energy and enthusiasm as well as welcoming personality made my decision to train so much easier.

I think that's what I appreciate so much about this talented and generous lady—she likes to ensure that everyone is included, everyone is learning, and everyone is having fun. And that, my friends, is a real gift!



Wildlife mapping with friends at York River State Park in the snow.

Memory by Judy Jones

Photo by Shirley Devan

When I saw the request to write something about Shirley I thought "this will be easy!" The only hard part is keeping it short! Shirley Devan has set the gold standard for Certified Master Naturalists. She is a natural educator, steward, citizen scientist, leader and great friend. Her interest, knowledge, and curiosity about the natural world are equaled by her dedication to the HRC organization. I have had the privilege of first-hand experience working with Shirley in many projects and settings. Whether hiking through chest high grass to survey breeding birds, counting butterflies on the Eastern Shore (followed by removing hundreds of seed ticks!), "paddling" (motor died!) in the Northwest River while she bands Prothonotary nestlings, cutting and spraying invasive bamboo in the National Park, or endless other activities it is always fun to be "in nature" with Shirley.

Shirley is the first to say "I can help" on any request for participation from HRC. She wears many hats and juggles many positions all while being in "the ready position" to head out with 15 minutes notice on any nature adventure. I learned the term "found my tribe" from Shirley and without a doubt she is a large part of why I've found my tribe in HRC.

Shirley out stalking Prothonotary Warblers.

Photo and memory by Nancy Barnhart

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Shirley has been here from the beginning, the most committed and devoted supporter of the MN program.

She was the one who told us about the program and encouraged us to participate in Basic Training.

She was the one who asked us to serve on the board.

She is positive and enthusiastic about every new project or activity, and it is contagious!

"Just try it, you'll like it, it will be great," approach.

She seems to always know the right thing to say, and makes speaking in front of a group seem easy to do.

Memory by Adrienne Frank



Shirley holds a Warbler in her hand.

Photo by Jeanette Navia.

system engineering and project management for high-tech aerospace and intelligence agencies and companies. I made sure the trains ran on time when I was onsite at training events, ensured the training materials arrived on the other side of the country (or the world) in plenty of time (but not too early because then they would be lost) and became my company's PowerPoint Ranger. I could bend PowerPoint to my will.

I was laid off in 2009 during the recession and have considered myself "retired" ever since. Sadly, my company is no longer in business.

ON BECOMING A BIRDER

With retirement I had more time to pursue my love of the natural world. I only started birding in the early 1990s—way late in life. I had joined the Bird Club and eagerly soaked up all I could from Bird Club events and field trips. I created the Bird Club's first web site. Trust me, it's a much easier task these days. Along with several co-editors I also helped prepare and publish the newsletter.

So much of what I know about birds I learned from Bill Williams and Ruth Beck, (founders of the Bird Club in 1977) and patient teachers for those of us who hung on their every word. In the late 2000s I was fortunate enough to be a member of the Craney Island bird monitoring team, led by Ruth Beck, professor at W&M.

Riding around the muddy roads at Craney with Ruth, Bill Williams, and a rotating cast of eager birders was an intense immersion in shorebird and duck identification and behavior. When I think now about how I know what I know about some species, I realize I absorbed it from the backseat of Ruth's SUV and from our spotting scopes perched on the dikes at Craney counting hundreds of ducks and shorebirds with Bill, Ruth, and others querying: "How many shovelers did you count?" "How many avocets did you get?" We compared totals and sometimes we had to count again. I miss Ruth Beck so much. AND I am ever grateful to Bill Williams for his kind and patient teaching, no matter where we're birding.

In 2008 I became President of the Williamsburg Bird Club and served in that role through 2013. What a learning experience—and I enjoyed every minute of it.

THE BIRTH OF THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER OF VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

In late 2006 I received a life-changing email from Bill Williams. The gist of the email was that a VA Master Naturalist Program was starting around the state and they wanted to gauge interest in the Williamsburg/James City County area. He and other science and nature educators in the area, including Billy Apperson of the VA Dept of Forestry (one of the VMN sponsors) invited a group of likely suspects to a meeting at the

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If it weren't for Shirley, I probably would not be Master Naturalists or other in local nature clubs.

I joined the Bird Club over ten years ago. Shirley took me under her wing as I was completely new to birds and bird identification. She took me birding in local places and to most of the annual VSO meetings held in different areas across the state.

She was patient as I had a hard time spotting the birds and remembering the species. I learned an awful lot from her and always had fun!

She also introduced me to the Virginia Society of Ornithology, the Virginia Native Plant Society, the Colonial Nature Photography Club, and of course, the Virginia Master Naturalists, which she helped found.

Memory by Jeanette Navia



Wren Wrustlers



Shirley receives a lifetime achievement award from Bill Williams for her work with the Williamsburg Bird Club.

Mention the name Shirley at any board meeting of the Williamsburg Bird Club, Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, Historic Rivers Master Naturalists or Virginia Society of Ornithology and everyone will know who that is, what she does and how exceptionally well it will be done. A true force of and for all things Nature.

Memory by Bill Williams

Shirley is the selfless epitome of volunteerism. Her consistent presence on every Cohort's Basic Training Team (and knowing EVERYONE in our ever-growing Chapter) is just one facet of her passion and commitment to the HRC. She is a mentor to us all.

Her unassuming and unflappable mild manner belies boundless energy, enthusiasm, and a positive can-do attitude. Shirley is a fabulous leader and extremely well-organized. She is a real treasure, and we are blessed—and fortunate—and grateful—that she is so deeply involved in all we do.

I wish I had her energy!

Memory by Sue Mutell



Geared up for birding.

Photo by Nancy Barnhart

library. Susan Powell, Clyde Marsteller, and I along with about 10-12 other interested folks participated in this meeting. (I apologize if I've left off names I should include.) Surprise! The likely suspects were interested, and a group formed under the guidance of Charlene Talcott who worked at York River State Park, our sponsor. In fact, Charlene came up with the name for our Chapter—Historic Rivers. Thank you, Charlene. We love our name! Too soon Charlene moved on to another State Park and Mary Apperson from York River State Park became our advisor. Spring 2007 HRC began with our first cohort—18 participants. The small training “committee” was also a part of the cohort. We trained and managed ourselves—long hours developing the curriculum with local experts (as the state VMN directed) in addition to getting the Board organized. With only 18 people, just about everyone had dual responsibilities. Our 18 members met frequently at board meetings, basic training classes, general meetings, and committee meetings. We were a tight tribe then, and those of us who are still active will be buddies forever.

BRING ON THE BUTTERFLIES

I've often said that birds are the gateway drug to butterflies. The Master Naturalists introduced me to butterflies—specifically Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscoll. While birds in the Williamsburg area have been studied, counted, photographed, described, and written about for decades, butterflies have not. Adrienne and Gary, along with several other butterfly enthusiasts in the area and the state—Teta Kain, Brian Taber, Allen Belden, and Ken Lorenzen—set out to study butterflies to the extent that birds in this area have been studied. Several Historic Rivers Chapter members accepted the challenge and took advantage of every “lep trek” offered by Adrienne, Gary, and the others. I enjoy contributing sightings and photos to this fast-moving local study. I learn so much from our local experts—in the field and around the table. In addition to recording birds in my yard and neighborhood, I also record butterflies, and my garden plantings are designed to provide host plants and nectar sources for butterflies.

While we need to know about 350 birds for the Colonial Historic Triangle, we can reasonably identify most butterflies if we know about 60 species. I have not abandoned birds by a long shot—I'll chase a rarity quite often, particularly if it's in the historic triangle. Now I also get excited about rare butterflies in our area.

Another plus for butterflies—they don't sing—a definite advantage for my hearing impairment.

AN ECUADORAN ADVENTURE

Photos by Nancy Barnhart



Shirley and her Ecuador traveling buddies.



Birding in Ecuador

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ADVENTURES WITH BIRDING

I've been fortunate to bird in Costa Rica and Ecuador (twice) in the last decade. I love seeing new birds as much as I love learning about new countries and habitats. I have no children and a NBS (non-birding spouse) so most birding trips are with other bird nerds. And in a few weeks, I and a few of these same bird nerds will be off to Belize for another birding adventure. Thank you all for sharing.

10 YEARS OF MEMORIES

Ten plus years in the Historic Rivers Chapter have provided many memorable experiences. How to choose the most memorable? The memories are highlighted as much by the naturalists as by the "nature." I say this frequently but it's so true: I learn so much from my fellow naturalists EVERY time I'm out in the field.



Shirley bags a Prothonotary Warbler.
Photo by Nancy Barnhart

Many projects are memorable, but one of the most gratifying is the Big Tree project. I was a new Master Naturalist in 2008 when VA Tech asked our Chapter to update Virginia's Big Tree database. Ten years go by and I'm still a Master Naturalist and I am fortunate to be able to respond to the same call and assist in the field again—measure some of the same trees, locate and measure many new ones (thanks to Rick Brown), and mourn the loss of several. Even more rewarding, other members of the 2008 team—Alice and Seig Kopinitz—were eager to join the effort. Old home week for us and the trees.

THE NANCY NORTON SPIRIT AWARD

And at the Chapter Christmas Party, I was honored more than you will ever know to receive the first Nancy Norton Spirit Award. It means as much to me as any other I've received. I miss Nancy and her spirit and commitment to the HRC. She'll be with our Chapter as long as we honor her spirit every year with this award. Thank you all.



Shirley holds the first Nancy Norton Spirit Award
Photo by Cindy Baker

A Few Highlights (not poetry) Thank You, Shirley!

By sight and sound, I first learned my Woodpeckers; Red-bellied, Red-headed, Downy,
Hairy, Pileated, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker.
So much more learned since that time.
And the experts I've met; gracious teachers, every one.
How? When? Who?
A warm and welcoming introduction to WBC Saturday bird walks,
Just a short nine years ago.
Thank you, Shirley!

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Virginia Master Naturalists? Cohort V you say? You'll love it! And I have!
An abundance of opportunities to make a difference in nature; volunteer to
Observe, monitor, document, uncover, count, clear, clean, dig, plant, listen, follow,
Build, explore, study, create, lead, teach, share, and learn.
Camaraderie and cherished friendships; hard work and laughter!
Thank you, Shirley

PROW action and adventure on the Northwest River,
Seven hours in a canoe filled to the brim; three hardy, smiling souls
(the expert bander, the data/feather/poop collector, the stealth driver)
Traversing the waterways, anticipating what surprises they'll find in busy nest boxes.
To see, to hear, to touch such sweet beings,
A true joy
Thank you, Shirley!

Where are we going? It's a secret!
A pit; shells, sand, soil, and water;
The players, bent over on hands and knees
Scraping away in inches at something important.
What's that you say? 16,000 years past?
Mastodon!
A once-in-a-lifetime experience.
Thank you, Shirley!

But it's the middle of the night!
It will be worth every minute.
Shhh, listen and look; teeny tiny Northern Saw-whet owls
Gently captured, held quietly, and waiting to be banded, weighed and measured.
Then, off you go; enjoy your life!
A special night,
Thank you, Shirley

Have you seen or heard one, yet? No, not a one!
Ah, the Bobwhite and Bunny Hop! (aka, Survey)
For eight years, 5:30 am, last Sunday in June, a two-hour search.
Binoculars in hand, auditory skills at the ready, two minutes at each mile point.
Look, Listen; "Bob---White?" Nope, nothing, zip, zero! Laughter abounds.
A dozen Bunnies, though; hurray!
And that silly Rooster chasing me down the street.
Breakfast is great!

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We can get to that nest box, just over there.
We slowly stomped through the sluggish mud and navigated through the trestles under the bridge.
On the other side, the thick, dark mud
Gobbled up our boots wherein feet and legs were supposed to be protected.
Alas, sunk, stuck and unable to lift or move, my dirty arms and hands outstretched,
I went down, face forward; now the creature of the wet, mud-filled Powhatan Creek!
I don't think we made it to the nest box,
But she got me out of the mess and safely back to shore.
Thank you, Shirley!

Of course, there's so much more to this great adventure story; a story without an end.
Oh, don't forget the stories within the story;
The little chapter (book) adventures, the many great, ongoing adventures,
And the wonderful, bigger-than-life adventures!
All these and the daily personal adventures, too.
Suffice to say, she's made a big difference in my life.
I am a lucky Duck!
Thank you, Shirley!
-Jennifer-

XIII Presentations



(L to R.) Joyce Carpenter, Roxanne Machamer, and Lizzie Green discuss their research and presentation of the life and work of Mary Cynthia Dickerson (1866–1923), an American herpetologist and the first curator of herpetology at the American Museum of Natural History after their Cohort XIII Naturalist Biography Presentation.

Both photos above by David Lunt



(L to R) Greg Carpenter, John Enright, and AnnJo Cosgrove identified the tremendous scope of the contributions of the American marine biologist, author, and conservationist Rachel Louise Carson (1907 – 1964) whose book *Silent Spring* and other writings are credited with advancing the global environmental movement. Presented during the Cohort XIII Naturalist Biography group presentations.



Above (L to R). Tory Gussman, Mike Whitfield, Rob Garriss, and Meghan Lamoreaux pose to the tune of a selection from Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* before presenting their research into the life and work of Dr. Karen Oberhauser (1956 – present), American conservation biologist, expert in Monarch Butterflies and Citizen Science champion at the Cohort XIII Naturalist Biography presentations.

Both photos by Lisa Reagan

To the left: Pat Murphy in character as the naturalist, author, adventurer, and conservationist Margaret Thomas “Mardy” Murie (1902 – 2003), guides her sled and dogs during her honeymoon trip through the wilds of Alaska. Pat and colleagues Carol Parfet and Heather Power (standing L to R) and Lark Smith (video recorded contribution) researched and presented the extensive environmental activist work and legacy of Murie for their Cohort XIII Naturalist Biography Presentation.



XIII BIOS

Compiled by Shirley Devan

JOHN ENRIGHT, WILLIAMSBURG, VA

- Native of Norfolk, Virginia
- Resident of Williamsburg since 1990
- Married to Mary Sellars Enright
- Two grown daughters, Elizabeth Anne (Beth Anne) and Mary Louise (Louise)
- Local real estate agent with Long & Foster Real Estate
- Former member of Float Fishermen of Virginia - white water canoeing and fishing organization with interests in river conservation and preservation
- Member and past president of Rotary Club of James City County
- My involvement with Virginia Master Naturalists is my first formal affiliation with an organization dedicated to protection, preservation and conservation of our natural environment.

CAROL PARFET, WILLIAMSBURG, VA

I grew up in western Massachusetts, where I spent much of my free time enjoying nature while playing in the woods and meadows near my home. From there, I gradually moved south, attending Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland, and then starting my career as a Fleet Support Officer in the Navy in Norfolk.

Following retirement from active duty, I worked for several years in Rhode Island, first at the Job Corps Center there and then at the Naval War College in Newport in the International Programs department.

My husband, Stephen, and I moved to Williamsburg in 2015 to be closer to children and grandchildren and are really enjoying it here. Retirement has been incredibly busy for us; in addition to spending time with family, we travel, sail, golf, sing in our church choir, and take lifelong learning courses at William and Mary.

One of our great pleasures is watching all the wildlife in our yard and trying to identify what we see. I'm really enjoying the Master Naturalist curriculum and looking forward to learning more and to future service projects.

FRANK L. SMITH

I grew up surrounded by farmland in Bedford County. My father taught government in high schools in Roanoke, but he had wanted to be a forest ranger. So he was often outdoors hiking among the pines and oaks in Jefferson National Forest, especially along the Appalachian Trail, and I was his very willing companion. He loved looking for wildflowers on our own property and along the trails. He kept a journal, noting not only the weather and location but when he first saw a certain flower bloom each spring. (Some he delighted in were Bloodroot and Trailing Arbutus.)

Family camping trips were a highlight of every summer, and my two sisters and brother and I explored Virginia that way. Between my senior year in high school and my freshman year at William and Mary, the family headed west to Colorado, where my dad was enrolled in a college program. While there we saw Mesa Verde, Four Corners, and Rocky Mountain National Park. I'll never forget the sight of hundreds of Rocky Mountain Columbine in the high upland meadows.

In college, while majoring in English, I took a number of courses related to the out-of-doors: Biology, Vascular Plants, Ornithology, Ecology. Highlights of each semester were field trips to places such as Hog Island and the Eastern Shore.

After 44 years in Boston, I'm glad to be back in Williamsburg, exploring Virginia's flora and fauna again. I am enjoying meeting like-minded people in the WBC and VMN, and I look forward to being of service.

I wish You Bluebirds in the Spring By Joni Carlson

I don't know if it is the "Turalee" call, happy chatter, or a brilliant flash of blue that makes me pause but there isn't anything better than seeing and hearing an Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) or even better, a pair! I greet them back with, "Bluebird, bluebird, bluebird!" We have learned to show our appreciation for one another in more intimate ways than just a quick hello.

Providing a great habitat, a predator-protected nesting box and access to water are key on my part—that certainly draws them to my yard. Live mealworms? Certainly, a bonus but not necessary, but it seems to build trust during our spring and summer romance. They have had population declines in the past but careful monitoring and correct mounting of nest boxes have shown that bluebirds are making a strong comeback.

February is the perfect time to start thinking of the bluebird season. Do I buy a box or build one? What materials do I need? How far apart should I space the boxes? Are there times I shouldn't interfere with a nesting box? How can I keep that raccoon or black snake out of my box? Do I clean the nest between broods? How can the community be involved in establishing and monitoring a bluebird trail? All great questions!

Understanding critters in their natural world means educating yourself on their behavior. Once you know the simple facts of their lifecycle, you will gain confidence in the elements needed to help attract them to your yard. Eastern bluebirds are year-round native birds who breed east of the Rockies from southeastern Canada south to the Gulf of Mexico and stay in the southern regions during winters. They build their nests in natural cavities or in nest boxes or other artificial refuges.

Males begin scoping out nests at the end of February and into March. The female starts building the nest usually in the first part of April (takes 3-4 days) preferring shed pine needles almost exclusively for nest. One egg is typically laid per day after the nest is complete (she makes a cup shape with her bottom to receive the eggs). First nest of the season usually yields 5 eggs—blue in color and 0.9 inches in size, and the pair can have up to three clutches in a nesting season. Females sit on eggs for 12-14 days with babies all hatching on the same day. The chicks grow quickly eating spiders, grubs, and worms both parents are providing. Babies fledge 18-21 days after hatching. The nest box should be completely cleaned out with a brush for the female to build the next nest sometimes as early as five days. The male tends to feed the fledglings for two weeks, and then returns to guard new nest.

You can spot eastern bluebirds in the wild in old woodpecker holes of oaks or dead pine trees, or you can build a house that simulates that cavity environment using wood (we use cedar for our nest boxes) or dried garden gourds with a good placement of a 1.5" access hole. I have found that bluebirds like to nest and lay eggs in "birdhouse" gourds but predation (those black snakes and raccoons) are hard to control if not properly mount-

ed with baffles and guards. The "Carl Little" bluebird houses we have built following the Virginia Bluebird Society guidelines (www.virginiabluebirds.org) are easy to follow and give great results. Don't forget to mount nest boxes correctly with predator guards (baffle for snake and Noll guard--hardwire around entry hole to keep cats and raccoons in check). Keep in mind that other cavity nesting birds like Carolina Chickadees (*Parus carolinensis*) and House Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*) may adopt your house so know the materials they like to use (chickadees use moss bottoms and animal fur nesting cups, and house wrens tend to twig it to the top!) so you can identify the species and enjoy their lifecycle up close. Nest and Eggs of North American Backyard Birds from the NestWatch Project at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a great field guide that will build your skills in this.

One problem bird that trail watchers try to deter is the non-native House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). They are an aggressive species and will kill bluebirds to steal their nesting box. And bluebirds need their space! Make sure to have close to 300 feet of space between the boxes on your property or trail. Open field spaces with some tree or bush edging is ideal for gleaned food and providing protection for fledgling birds.



Photo by Cheryl Leu

Wildflower of the Month—November 2018

John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

By Helen Hamilton, John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

BRITISH SOLDIER LICHEN

Cladonia cristatella

A bright spot in the woods and meadows in winter is this little lichen with the red caps, named for the red uniforms of the British soldiers during the Revolutionary War. The surrounding material is gray-green, a color characteristic of lichens, reflecting their dual lifestyle. A green alga *Trebouxia erici* supplies nourishment by its photosynthesis while the fungus, *Cladonia cristatella* furnishes necessary water and nutrients.

Lichens are not plants, but an association, often called “mutualism” of two, and sometimes three different organisms. Often gray-green in color, their growth form can be shrubby, as is this species, leafy, or crusty, among others. Certain lichens live on leaves, as parasites. Sexual reproduction is by spores, formed in ascospores, the red caps of this species, and bowl-shaped structures in other lichens. They reproduce asexually when a fragment is broken from the main body, and by producing microscopic, dust-like particles distributed by the wind.

These are extremely important organisms ecologically. They can transfer nitrogen from the air to the soil in a form usable by plants, they break down old wood, returning nutrients to the soil, and can grow on bare rock, eventually dissolving the rock and creating minute bits of soil. Very sensitive to air pollution, a lack of lichens in an area indicates an unhealthy atmosphere.

British Soldier is usually found on mossy logs, tree bases, and stumps. Native to North America, this species is widespread in Virginia, common in moist exposed roadside soil and rotting wood, especially in sunny openings.

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



British Soldier Lichen (*Cladonia cristatella*) Photo by Helen Hamilton

Upcoming Continuing Education (CE) Opportunities

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.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at W&M (formerly, Christopher Wren Association) classes that contain content on the natural environment are accepted as CE training. Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at W&M classes require registration and payment (\$\$\$) through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at W&M (formerly, 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

FRI 03/01/2019	W&M Osher Institute Class, "ID of Trees in Winter," 9:30-11:30, W&M Wightman Cup Rm, Session 2 of 3, \$\$\$
SAT 03/02/2019	VA Cooperative Ext/York "Horticulture Extravaganza," 8:00am-2:30pm, Tabb HS- Lecture Sessions for CE; \$20, must register; Registration Forms at https://york.ext.vt.edu/
SAT 03/02/2019	Blue Ridge PRISM, Spring Invasive Plant Workshop, 10:30 am-12:00 pm, Reedy Creek Headquarters, Richmond, https://blueridgeprism.org
SUN 03/03/2019	Hampton Roads Bird Club Sunday Bird Walk at Newport News Park; 7:00 am
THU 03/07/2019	Williamsburg Regional Library, "The Fascinating World of Spiders," with Norman Fashing, 7:00 pm, Williamsburg Regional Library (Scotland Street)
SAT 03/09/2019	Williamsburg Bird Club Bird Walk, 8:00-10:00 am, Location TBD
WED 03/13/2019	HRC Annual Membership Mtg, and Cohort XIII Graduation, 6:00-9:00 pm, JCC Library, Kitzinger Room (speaker portion for CE credit)
FRI 03/15/2019	W&M Osher Institute Class, "ID of Trees in Winter," 9:30-11:30, W&M Wightman Cup Rm, Session 3 of 3, \$\$\$
SAT 03/16/2019	WBotGarden, "Creating Habitats for Pollinators in Your Garden," 10:00-11:30 am, Freedom Park
SUN 03/17/2019	Hampton Roads Bird Club Sunday Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7:00 am
SUN 03/18/2019	W&M Osher Institute Class, "For the Beauty of It All-Eastern U.S.," 1:30-3:30 pm James-York Playhouse, Session 1 of 3, \$\$\$
WED 03/20/2019	Williamsburg Bird Club Monthly Meeting (speaker portion for CE credit), 7:00 pm, W&M Integrated Science Center, Room 1127
THU 03/21/2019	W&M Osher Institute Town and Gown Lecture, "Changing Climate/Impact on the Chesapeake Bay, 12:15-1:15, School of Education, Matoaka Woods Room, must be registered with Osher Learning Institute
THU 03/21/2019	CoCoRaHS Webinar, "Doplar Radar on Wheels," 1:00 pm eastern, www.cocorahs.org
SAT 03/21/2019	W&M Osher Institute Class, "What Bugs You: Introduction to Insects and Other Arthropods," 2:00-4:00 pm, W&M Wightman Cup Room, Session 1 of 3, \$\$\$
SAT 03/23/2019	John Clayton Chapter-Virginia Native Plant Society, Early Spring in the Forest Walk at Wahrani Nature Trail, New Kent, 10:00 am
SAT 03/23/2019	Williamsburg Bird Club Bird Walk at New Quarter Park, 8:00 am
MON 03/25/2019	W&M Osher Institute Class, "For the Beauty of It All-Eastern U.S.," 1:30-3:30 pm James-York Playhouse, Session 2 of 3, \$\$\$
THU 03/28/2019	W&M Osher Institute Class, "What Bugs You: Intro. to Insects and Other Arthropods," 2:00-4:00 pm, W&M Wightman Cup Room, Session 2 of 3, \$\$\$
THU 03/28/2019	VIMS After-Hours Lecture, "The Story of the Coelacanth," 7:00-8:00 pm, VIMS, McHugh Auditorium

HRC Volunteer Service Opportunities

DATE	START TIME	PROJECT CODE AND NAME	CONTACT	EMAIL	NOTES
Monday, March 4, 2019	9:00 AM	C1b -- Wildlife Mapping- York River State Park	Adrienne Frank	adrienne-gary@cox.net	
Wednesday, March 6, 2019	8:45 AM	C1b -- Wildlife Mapping - Jamestown Island	Nancy Barnhart	barnhartnt@gmail.com	
Wednesday, March 6, 2019	6:30 PM	A1a -- Board meeting at the Williamsburg Landing	Adrienne Frank	adrienne-gary@cox.net	Williamsburg Landing, 2nd floor
Friday, March 8, 2019	9:00 AM	S1e -- Work in Williamsburg Botanical Garden every Friday	Gary Driscole	adrienne-gary@cox.net	
Friday, March 8, 2019	10:00 AM	S2a5 -- Artifact Wash and Talk	Sara Lewis	Sara.Lewis@york-county.gov	Let Sara know if you can help out
Monday, March 11, 2019	9:00 AM	C1b -- Wildlife Mapping- York River State Park	Adrienne Frank	adrienne-gary@cox.net	
Wednesday, March 13, 2019	6:00 PM	A1a -- HRC Annual Meeting -- Business Portion	Adrienne Frank	adrienne-gary@cox.net	Kitzinger Room -- JCC Library
Thursday, March 14, 2019	8:30 AM	C1b -- Wildlife Mapping - Greensprings Interpretive Trail	Rose Ryan/Keith Navia	Rose: whisperingwind10875@gmail.com	Keith: schrodcat7@gmail.com
Friday, March 15, 2019	9:00 AM	S1e -- Work in Williamsburg Botanical Garden every Friday	Gary Driscole	adrienne-gary@cox.net	
Monday, March 18, 2019	9:00 AM	C1b -- Wildlife Mapping- York River State Park	Adrienne Frank	adrienne-gary@cox.net	
Friday, March 22, 2019	9:00 AM	S1e -- Work in Williamsburg Botanical Garden every Friday	Gary Driscole	adrienne-gary@cox.net	

Saturday, March 23, 2019	9:00 AM	S2c -- Presquile National Wildlife Refuge: spring prep work	Cyrus Brame, USFWS	cyrus_brame@fws.gov	contact Cyrus if you plan to attend
Monday, March 25, 2019	9:00 AM	C1b -- Wildlife Mapping- York River State Park	Adrienne Frank	adrienne-gary@cox.net	
Thursday, March 28, 2019	8:30 AM	C1b -- Wildlife Mapping - Green-springs Interpretive Trail	Rose Ryan/Keith Navia	Rose: whispering-wind10875@gmail.com	Rose: whispering-wind10875@gmail.com
Friday, March 29, 2019	9:00 AM	S1e -- Work in Williamsburg Botanical Garden every Friday	Gary Driscole	adrienne-gary@cox.net	
Sunday, March 31, 2019	9:00 AM	C1b -- Wildlife Mapping - Yorktown Battlefield	Jeff Honig	aberlour@cox.net	Text Jeff if you arrive late & need to locate group -- (757) 771-8041



Black-throated Blue Warbler Photo by Cindy Baker