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THE NATURALIST

THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER OF VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS



The President's Message

By Adrienne Frank

How wonderful it is to keep learning! For those of us doing Wildlife Mapping, we continue to learn about what we see, sounds we hear, and relationships within the habitats. Seeing diverse wildlife and habitat improvements just make me smile.

This spring at York River State Park (YRSP), there were two great observations: a Purple Martin box was erected, after being absent for years, and a Martin family occupied it.

Butterfly sightings have improved dramatically, due to reduced mowing and more growth of wildflowers and shrubs. We have had an outstanding list of species for May. Our wildlife mapping team recorded 51 species of birds, 28 species of butterflies, 4 mammals, and 13 reptiles (See table on following page).

We also identified a few dragonflies, insects, and plants. In the photo on the right is an interesting sighting of a Dragonfly from York River State Park on June 3rd. The photo was taken by Judy Kinshaw-Ellis. This may be an old female Blue Dasher, but dragonfly identification is difficult, and this is my third attempt at naming it.



Here is an interesting sighting of a Dragonfly from York River State Park on June 3rd. Photo by Judy Kinshaw-Ellis.

What is incredible is the number of tiny balls underneath its thorax and abdomen. I asked Ken, the entomologist, and he said, "All those little bumps are mites. I've seen mites on dragonflies before, but never so many on the abdomen; they more often cluster on the thorax. They are a species of water mite that affix themselves to the immature stages of dragonflies and damselflies, then transfer to the adult during the final molt." I thought this was fascinating.

Here is another great dragonfly from June 3rd (on the next page). The photo is also by Judy Kinshaw-Ellis:

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The President's Letter, continued...

A Gray Petaltail – There is nothing else like this dragonfly. This “large brownish-gray and black dragonfly with separated eyes” perches alone, often landing on tree trunks, and flies fast and direct. We saw it fly out and back to the same perch several times.

Please note the counts below for York River State Park for May. On the following page you'll find the list for HRC's Butterfly Count for April. There is also a calendar of upcoming summer butterfly counts!

And you'll find an invitation to volunteer at the upcoming Williamsburg Botanical Garden's Butterfly Festival on page 8!



Photo by Judy Kinshaw-Ellis.

YRSP Wildlife Mapping for May 2019

<u>Birds</u>		<u>Butterflies</u>	<u>Reptiles</u>
Mourning Dove	Tree Swallow	Pipevine Swallowtail	Eastern Rat Snake
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Northern Rough-wing Sw.	Spicebush Sw.	Garter Snake
Chimney Swift	Purple Martin	Black Sw.	Painted Turtle
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Carolina Chickadee	Eastern Tiger Sw.	Mud Turtle
Clapper Rail	Tufted Titmouse	Zebra Sw.	Fence Lizard
Ring-billed Gull	White-breasted Nuthatch	Orange Sulfur	Broad-headed skink
Double-crested Cormorant	Carolina Wren	Gray Hairstreak,	Five-lined Skink
Great Blue Heron	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Red-banded HS	Bull Frog
Black Vulture	Eastern Bluebird	Azure	Green Frog
Turkey Vulture	Gray Catbird	Eastern Tailed Blue	Cricket Frog
Osprey	European Starling	Variegated Fritillary	Copes Gray Tree Frog
Bald Eagle	American Goldfinch	Red-spotted Purple	American/Fowler's Toad
Belted Kingfisher	Chipping Sparrow	American Lady	
Red-headed Woodpecker	Eastern Towhee	Common Buckeye	<u>Mammals</u>
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Brown-headed Cowbird	Monarch	Muskrat
Downy Woodpecker	Ovenbird	Little Wood Satyr	Squirrel
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Common Yellowthroat	Carolina Satyr	Rabbit
Acadian Flycatcher	Hooded Warbler	Gemmed Satyr	Deer
Great Crested Flycatcher	Northern Parula	Silver-spotted Skipper	
Yellow-throated Vireo	Pine Warbler	Checkered Sk,	
Red-eyed Vireo	Yellow-throated Warbler	Sachem	
White-eyed Vireo	Summer Tanager	Least Sk	
Blue Jay	Northern Cardinal	Clouded Sk	
American Crow	Blue Grosbeak	Fiery	
Fish Crow	Indigo Bunting	Aaron's	
Barn Swallow		Delaware Sk	
		Broadwing Sk.	
		Zabulon	

SUMMER BUTTERFLY COUNTS 2019

Butterfly experts and novices are welcome to participate in regional butterfly counts during the summer. I encourage everyone to join in with the fun.

Each count is held in a registered Butterfly Circle (15-miles wide) and results are submitted to the North America Butterfly Association. The following is a list of counts for which we have participated. Of course, our Williamsburg count is the best ever!

June 28 (Friday) - Island Ford Butterfly Count (East Rockingham County) – Mike Smith foersmiths@comcast.net

July 5 (Friday) - Shenandoah National Park Count - Mike Smith foersmiths@comcast.net

July 19 (Friday) – Dismal Swamp Count – 3100 Desert Rd, Suffolk, VA 23434 at 9 am. Contact Jen Wright Biologist at jennifer_wright@fws.gov

July 21 (Sunday) Chippokes Count – Some folks will take the ferry across the James River and some will cover Jamestown Island and surrounds. Contact Teta Kain at tkdragonrun7@gmail.com

July 24 (Wednesday)- Virginia Beach Count - Possible Areas (Norfolk Botanical Garden, VBAREC, VB Middle School, Red Wing Park, First Landing State Park, Pleasure House Point Natural Area), etc.... Alice Snyder at alice.m.snyder@gmail.com

July 28 (Sunday) – Delmarva Tip Count on the Eastern Shore of VA is centered around Kiptopeke State Park. Lynn Davidson hal.lynn@comcast.net

August 10 (Saturday) – Williamsburg Area Count is our HRCVMN sponsored count and includes 5 or 6 groups at parks and surrounds: York River State Park, New Quarter Park, Freedom Park, Little Creek, and Colonial Williamsburg. Contact Adrienne-gary@cox.net

August 26 (Monday) - Back Bay Count - Possible Areas (Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Villages at West Neck, Sherwood Lakes, Asheville Park, West Neck Creek Natural Area), etc... Alice Snyder alice.m.snyder@gmail.com



Mid-April Butterfly Count

Here is the count for the HRC's "Mid-April Butterfly Count" conducted April 12-14. Brian Taber, President of Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, kept score. CVWO is a co-sponsor for our HRC butterfly counts.

Zebra Swallowtail 25
 Black Swallowtail 1
 Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 91
 Falcate Orangetip 11
 Clouded Sulphur 1
 Orange Sulphur 1
 Sleepy Orange 2
 Juniper Hairstreak 1
 Henry's Elfin 7
 Brown Elfin 1 (possibly same one on Thurs and Fri)
 Red-banded Hairstreak 1
 Eastern Tailed Blue 26
 azure 11
 American Snout 1
 Monarch 1
 Pearl Crescent 7
 Eastern Comma 1
 Red Admiral 1
 American Lady 1
 Gemmed Satyr 4
 satyr sp. 1

 Juvenal's Duskywing 3
 Horace's Duskywing 3
 duskywing sp. 7
 Common Checkered-Skipper 8

So...that's 23 species, plus there was a Mourning Cloak, a White M Hairstreak, a Silver-spotted Skipper and a Question Mark...for a count-week species total of 27!

Visit the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory at www.vawildliferesearch.org.



OSPREY WATCH - HRC'S 7TH SEASON

PHOTOS BY CATHERINE FLANAGAN



*Caption: Top photo, Queen's Lake Marina Osprey Pair in Nest #676 for Osprey-Watch in New Quarter Park; male Osprey at Burwell's Bluff in Kingsmill; Mother and three chicks on James River, Kingsmill.
Story and more photos on the following page!*

OSPREY WATCH 2019

By Catherine Flanagan

While still in training with Cohort XI, I attended the kickoff meeting for Osprey Watch. I thought I had to be the luckiest person when Cheryl Jacobson said there was a nest available to monitor. That nest, in Queen's Lake, has a dramatic entrance as you turn into the marina from a high point where you can see right away if there is an osprey on it.

From the first time I saw the female on the nest from the top of the road, I was hooked. My first diary entry was, "I watched for 45 minutes. She was alert and stayed on the nest except for one short flight." That, to me was a great day and what followed were even more wonderful days as I watched the amazing development of chicks from hatchling to fledgling.

This nest has been monitored since HRC Osprey Watch began in 2012 and has produced 14 healthy fledglings! I talk about osprey to just about everyone I know and couldn't be more enthusiastic about being able to do something that I love and at the same time be contributing valuable citizen science. I didn't hesitate a moment when Cheryl asked if I would be interested in taking on a lead role in Project Osprey-Watch.

I would like to suggest that if anyone wants to invite others to come along with them when checking their nests, let people know a day or so ahead of time through the Master Naturalist email list. Going with a partner or team can make things easier and more fun. You don't have to be in Osprey-Watch either to come along if you want to see what it's like.

It is interesting just to see the different structures and environments that the nests are in, some in the river on channel markers, cypress trees, ferry pilings, or platforms, some in suburban areas in tall pine trees, utility poles, and even chimneys.

Osprey are very vocal and are dramatic when seen at closer range. It is a special feeling when you are quiet and observing their world, waiting with them, noticing them sensing danger, or calling out in communication with their mate.

Continued on next page...

***Caption of photo on the right: Osprey nest number 4792 at Kingsmill on the James River in June 2019.
Photo by Cathy Flanagan.***



***Nest number 743 at Kingsmill on the James River.
Photo by Cathy Flanagan.***



OSPREY WATCH 2019

Here are a few thoughts from a survey I sent out about best or memorable moments and mishaps or misfortunes while monitoring osprey.

A few of the best moments were:

- Watching young hopping up and down and testing their wings
- Finding a new nests
- Watching an osprey carry a fish and deliver it to the nests
- Copulation was mentioned as interesting because it was not often seen.
- One observer noted that a male osprey never picked up a stick to help with nest building for a couple weeks but happily they got it together and completed the nest.
- Another admired how hard the adults work to raise their fledglings, observing though, that they almost seem to make expressions like humans do with their own teenagers!

Things don't always go as planned of course. One of the more unusual causes of nest failure was an instance involving a pair of geese that managed to oust an osprey pair off the nest the osprey had just built on a duck blind. Many nests have been blown down in strong storms, or the osprey have been frightened away by construction nearby, but almost all report that the resilient osprey work immediately to rebuild.

Please Note: We will visit the nest in Queen's Lake immediately following our **next meeting which will be held at New Quarter Park, on June 22 at 10:00 am.** Meet in the parking lot and we will walk to the shelter for a brief meeting. All those interested in joining osprey watch or just learning about osprey are welcome.



Nest number 638 at the York River State Park. Photo by Cathy Flanagan.

A LETTER FROM OSPREY WOMAN...



Osprey nest number 676 at Queen's Lake Marina in June 2019. Photo by Cathy Flanagan.

By Cheryl Jacobson

When I moved to Virginia from the West in 2009, I immediately became aware of all the magnificent osprey in the area. I learned that the Chesapeake Bay has been called the “osprey garden” because it has the most concentrated population of the birds in the world. When I graduated from Cohort 6, the first thing I wanted to do was to initiate Osprey Watch as an HRC Project. The HRC Board approved, and I held a “kick-off” and began recruiting and training Osprey Watchers.

In 2017, the project had grown to 61 master naturalist watchers monitoring 110 nests in Virginia, and 2,501 watchers monitoring 6,124 nests, worldwide. Osprey Watchers are linked by an interest in osprey, concern for the health of aquatic environments, and data submitted to a repository through the Osprey Watch website. The mission of Osprey Watch is to collect information on a large enough spatial scale to be useful in addressing three of the most pressing issues facing aquatic ecosystems including global climate change, depletion of fish stocks, and environmental contaminants.

Last year, during the summer, I traveled extensively and because of that, my leadership of the Project was lacking. This year, because of health issues, I recruited Cathy Flanagan to assist in leading. She is also very enthusiastic about Osprey and has demonstrated lots of energy in leading the project. I have been providing her with training etc. now for several months and at this time I am ready to step aside and turn the project over to her. Of course, I will continue to monitor my nests in Kingsmill on the James River (Rivers Edge) and will be seeing all of my fellow osprey watchers at meetings.

Without your efforts, this project would not have the success that it is having today so in deepest gratitude I thank all of you who love and watch Osprey. So for now, Osprey Woman is signing off.

BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL!



By Judy Jones

It is with great excitement that Williamsburg Botanical Garden and Green Spring Garden Club Inc. offer to our community a Butterfly Festival at the Williamsburg Botanical Gardens at Freedom Park on the weekend of August 3rd and 4th. This festival has several parts, but the main and most exciting focus will be two butterfly tents with over 300 butterflies enjoying those hot August days. We will also have activities for children as well as educational programs and speakers for families, children, and adults throughout the two days.

In order to make this happen, we need to enlist some volunteers. These folks fit into several categories....

- **Tent Volunteers** – These folks stand inside the tent or just outside the door, answering questions and helping folks to hold butterflies, ‘dust’ the folks who are exiting, and hand out nectar sticks as folks enter. (Inside and outside folks will shift every 30 minutes, due to the heat.
- **Set-up/take-down volunteers** – These folks help out with the set up at 10:00 Friday morning and take down Sunday afternoon after the butterfly release at 3:30.
- **Crafts volunteers**—These folks make sure materials are out and available and that the children understand what to do as well as enjoy themselves.
- **Photographers** – We need folks who are willing to join us on Saturday or Sunday and to take photos of kids and adults as they enjoy the butterflies and the event.
- **Attendance ‘clickers’** – A small job but an important one as you help us record the attendance.
- **Plant Sales** – These folks will be at the plant table and sell host and nectar plants to interested folks.

If you think any of these jobs sound like fun, please go to Sign Up Genius at www.bit.ly/wbgbfly19vol and register times that work for you. If you have any trouble using the signup form, please email me and I'll sign you up at this end. And many, many thanks for helping us make this festival a success!



Photos above of 2018 Butterfly Festival by Judy Jones.

FIELD NOTES FOR FUN!



Left: Prothonotary Warbler nestling preparing to fledge — May 21, 2019 at Northwest River. Photo by Judy Jones.

Below: This Ebony Jewelwing actually ate a mosquito right in front of me and then posed for a photo!! The Ebony Jewelwing is a Damselfly. Photo by Sherry Brubaker



Hatch Day for Bluebirds! Nest box 24 at Fords Colony in 2017. By Shirley Devan.

There is a species of horsefly known as *Bootylicious*. What celebrity inspired the nickname? Beyonce, who recorded the hit 2001 song “Bootylicious” with Destiny’s Child. Researchers claim that the fly—official name *Scaptia beyonceae*—is the “all-time diva of flies.” It’s certainly eye-catching with its large gold butt!!

What is the only kind of fish known to have warm blood circulating throughout its body? The opah (also known as the moonfish). The opah is also distinguished by its vibrant color—red, with white spots and gold-ringed eyes.

I swear, I’m not making these crazy things up--My “source” is Page-a-Day 365 Days of Amazing Trivia — Sherry Brubaker

OYSTER RESTORATION

By Carol Ely

The Oyster Restoration team at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has reached out to us to see if there might be anyone interested in helping with shell pickups at some of our local restaurants.

I have been participating in this effort since my Basic Training days in 2016 and find it very rewarding! There are approximately 7-8 restaurants in the Williamsburg area that participate on a regular basis and a few others periodically. In fact, of the 65 restaurants state-wide that participate in this program, Berret's is the #2 producer of recycled shells (Saltine in Norfolk is #1).

We had a number of William and Mary students helping over the past year but all have graduated, leaving a number of restaurants in need of someone to make the pick ups. Specifically, Captain George's (Saturdays and Mondays), Craft 31 (Saturdays) and Berret's (Fridays) need volunteers. You can sign up to make regular pick ups each week on a particular day or you can fill in when you can (e.g. once a month). I make the Berret's Monday pick up each week but it is flexible in that if there is a week I cannot make it, I just let the volunteer coordinator know and she will try to find someone to fill in. No pressure! Any help is much appreciated!

If you think you might be interested but would like to know more of the details of what this entails, feel free to contact me directly and I will be happy to answer any questions and provide more information. If you know you want to participate, contact me and I will put you in touch with the CBF Oyster Restoration Specialist who schedules the volunteers.

For those not familiar with the CBF's Shell Recycling Program, they reuse empty oyster shells in efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay's native oyster population. Once the shells are collected, cleaned and cured, CBF places them in 800 gallon water tanks containing microscopic larvae that attach themselves to the shells. On average each recycled shell becomes home to dozens of baby oysters called spat. CBF plants the spat-on-shell in Chesapeake Bay waterways to grow and expand oyster reefs. Each adult oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water a day! What a great way to help make a difference in our local environment!

Thanks!

Chesapeake Bay Native Oyster Recovery Program Commonwealth of Virginia



The USACE is the lead federal agency and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission is the non-federal sponsor.

The purpose of the program is the restoration and rehabilitation of reef habitat to provide for self-sustaining native oyster populations and associated fish and wildlife habitat within the Chesapeake Bay watershed in Virginia.

This program is authorized by Section 704 (b) of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. The Oyster Recovery Program also achieves goals set by the Chesapeake Bay Protection Executive Order 13508 and the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement.






WHY RESTORE THE EASTERN OYSTER?

- Reefs are habitat for fish and invertebrates. They provide shelter, spawning, and nursery areas for organisms of the Bay.
- Current oyster populations are approximately 1% of historic abundance. They are essential to the ecology, economy, and culture of the region.
- As filter feeders, oysters provide water quality improvements to the Bay by removing suspended solids, nutrients and algal biomass from the water.
- A keystone species supporting many other valuable commercial fisheries as prey (red drum, croaker, etc.)
- Reefs stabilize habitat, sequester carbon and increase landscape diversity.

OYSTER FACTS

- * Each day, one oyster filters 50 gallons of water and one acre of oyster reef filters up to 10 million gallons of water.
- * Oyster reefs provide an effective natural barrier to storm waves and sea level rise. They absorb as much as 76 to 93 percent of wave energy, which reduces erosion, flooding, and property damage from coastal storms.

POTENTIAL MEASURES FOR REEF RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION



Installation of artificial reef structures



Rehabilitation of existing reefs with shell or artificial substrate



Land conservation or restoration that provides upstream water quality benefits



Creation of natural shell reefs



Installation of granite or concrete to create subtidal reefs



Construction or modernization of oyster hatcheries



Application of native oyster spat to new or existing reefs



Installation of intertidal reefs using various structures or living shorelines





SAVE THE DATE!

The 5th annual Butterfly Festival is coming to Williamsburg Botanical Gardens the first weekend in August. We are hoping you'll mark it on your calendar, August 3rd and 4th, and not only visit the Festival but also volunteer to help us out. We could use your expertise and enthusiasm in either the butterfly tents or the kids' crafts area.

More information is coming but please mark the dates on those calendars and then volunteer on Sign Up Genius when it heads your way. If you have any questions, please email Judy Jones at jjones184@cox.net.

PLEASE GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK!

For members interested in working with the **Chesapeake Bay Foundation** this summer to **help build oyster reef habitats** at the CBF site in Gloucester. This is a service project outside that requires working with cement and molds. CBF has attained a grant to help fund the building of 200 reef balls. These are smaller than the ones built in previous years if you are familiar with them.

The Historic Rivers chapter had scheduled an event for June with an open invitation to other chapters, but due to a shipping delay needed to reschedule for early July. We now have the materials located, onsite and are ready to build. Several volunteers are needed for these 2-day events to be successful. Please let us know if you are interested in coming out by completing the linked survey below by June 25th.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZF7ZHQV>

Currently we have two options for build dates in July (1/2 or 8/9), both are Monday/Tuesday. If there is enough interest we'll schedule both sets of dates. An official signup will be sent once we narrow down dates. Please share this message with other members of your respective chapters.

If you have any questions feel free to email me. Thanks! — Claire White



The Naturalist is the monthly newsletter of the Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists. It is a membership benefit for current members of HRC.

Newsletter contributions are due by the 7th of the month for inclusion in the issue distributed to the HRC Google Group by the middle of the month.

Send your ready-to-publish photos, notices, stories, or reports to The Naturalist's newsletter editor, Lisa Reagan, at HRCnewsletter@gmail.com

Make sure your work is formatted and labeled properly. Please make sure your copy is error-free. Lisa is happy to help you if you have questions!

HRC MEMBERSHIP MEETING PLACE CHANGE



Dear HRC Members:

We will have a change in time and place for our General Meetings, starting next month. Due to renovations at the Kitzinger Room at the Upper County Library, we will be unable to meet there for several months. We may not be able to use that room until February of 2020. The Williamsburg Library has offered the Stryker Center to us at a reduced cost, which is terrific. We will meet at the Stryker Center from May until December and perhaps through January 2020.

Because the room is being used until 6 pm, we will need to begin our meetings at 6:30 pm. This will give the other group a chance to leave and for us time to set up.

Here are the dates for General Meetings until the end of 2019. I have also posted these dates on the Vol. Management System calendar. Hope to see you all there.

Adrienne Frank
HRC President

Note: Parking is available across the street at the two-level Parking Garage - 415 North Boundary Street.

- July - No General Meeting
- August - No General Meeting
- September 11 - 6:30 pm, General Meeting at Stryker Center – 412 North Boundary Street, Williamsburg, Room 127
- October 9 - 6:30 pm, General Meeting at Stryker Center – 412 North Boundary Street, Williamsburg, Room 127
- November 13 - 6:30 pm, General Meeting at Stryker Center – 412 North Boundary Street, Williamsburg, Room 127
- December 11 – Holiday Party – Legacy Hall, New Town Avenue

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