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THE NATURALIST

THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER OF VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS

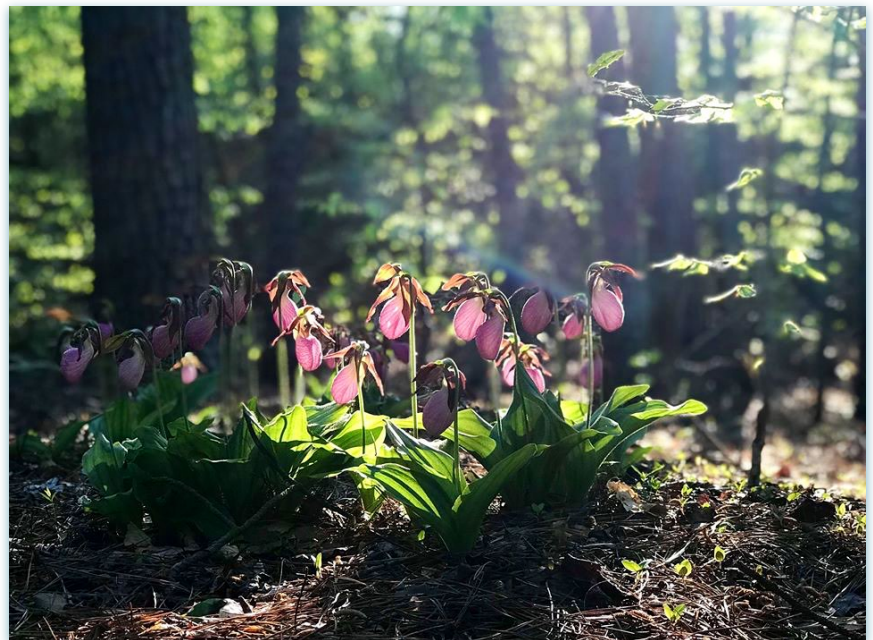


The President's Message

By Rick Brown

As we adapt to this new reality of co-existing, by separation, I am very touched by the expressions of kindness and generosity exhibited by people I know and have recently come to know. We all look for good news and rays of hope in times of crises. I do that every day now. I obviously have a lot more time for introspection lately. Many of you have endured far worse personal tragedies that surpass anything that may happen to us as a result of our most recently shared troubles. But the thing that now binds us is the awful prospect that we are all suddenly vulnerable to the same external threat.

As I look at my empty calendar I realize that, while all of those volunteer projects are worthwhile and provide a chance to learn, what I truly miss is your company. It is my goal is to do everything I can to maintain some semblance of that personal contact so that we can eventually pick up where we left off. Let's try anything that allows us to see and listen to as many of us as can be crowded on a telephone line or computer screen.



Pink Lady Slipper Orchid Colony, by Lisa Reagan. (This space is usually our "group" shots, but since we're quarantined, here's a plant group taken on Earth Day on Lisa's farm in Toano.)

I thought our first attempt at a virtual gathering went remarkably well given the distance and technology limitations. Just seeing your faces and hearing your voices raised my spirits. I hope it had the same effect on each of you. Sharing your activities, photos, ideas, problems, questions and diversions with others is also helpful in nurturing a group dynamic.

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The President's Letter, continued...

Where would we be without the internet? Continuing interaction, as personal as we can make it, is very important to maintaining morale and involvement in our chapter. I look for any and all suggestions that will keep us active and involved, and ensure that our chapter comes through the present troubles together as a group that remains as interesting and viable as it was on March 11 when we all got together for our last in-person meeting. Until then, stay healthy and busy, keep in touch and take care of each other.

Rick

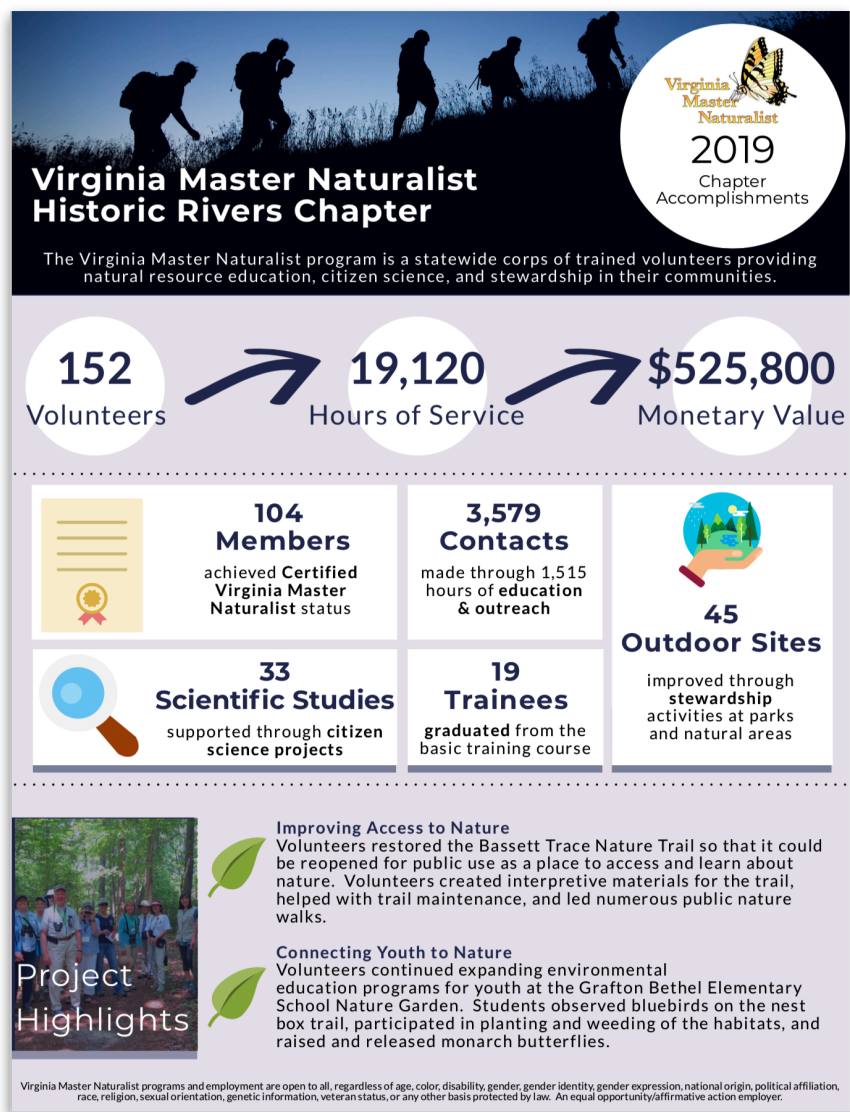
Post Script...

Following the monthly chapter meeting the other night, I received a couple of requests for information on how to make donations in Karen's memory. Here is that information again for those who may be interested.

As previously stated, a committee has been appointed to make recommendations to the executive board for the disbursement and use of these funds.

Please send your donation made out to the "HRC Master Naturalists", in memory of Karen Grass at:

Historic Rivers Chapter
Virginia Master Naturalists
P. O. Box 5026
Williamsburg, VA 23188



VMN Coordinator Michelle Prysby created this infographic from the data and information we sent in our 2019 Annual Report.

Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists Board of Directors

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OSPREYS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

BY CATHY FLANAGAN (PHOTO ABOVE BY WENDY NELSON)

The Osprey Watch group continues to grow. There are over 60 nests assigned to HRC Master Naturalists on the website. Some of these nests host the same breeding pair year after year. Others are abandoned or lost to storms or predators. The earliest date of arrival this season, was February 29th at the platform built across the creek at the Queen's Lake Marina. This nest has been occupied every year since 2012. Since these ospreys are not banded, we cannot know for certain that they are the same pair.

Monitoring osprey is exciting but a little like fostering an animal. Over the spring and summer, you watch the development of the chicks from hatchling to formidable raptor. Then one day, the family disperses and spends the rest of the year apart from each other somewhere in South America.

The photos below were all taken by the monitors this spring. Events such as nest building, egg laying, incubation, hatching, and fledging are all milestones that will be recorded by the monitors. If they are lucky, they can catch a photo of some of these events. Right now monitors are reporting incubating activity at most of our occupied nests. In a couple weeks, the next milestone will be *hatching!*

For many osprey watchers, this is a time when activity is extremely hard to see -since most is happening low in the nest. However, there is a wonderful nest cam to watch at this link:

<https://explore.org/livecams/ospreys/osprey-cam-chesapeake-conservancy>

In this nest in Kent Maryland, there are three eggs. If you check in periodically, you will find out when hatching is expected. It's exciting to watch these moments live – but there are usually recorded clips available as well.

Want to learn more about Osprey? Join the Osprey-Watch mailing list.

Contact: Cathy Flanagan flanagan.catherine@gmail.com

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Nest built on day marker



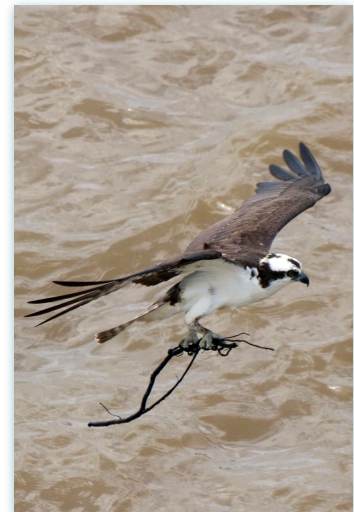
Nest built on platform



Bringing food



Mating



Bringing nest material

*Photos contributed by the
Osprey Watch group
members.*



Nest built on cell tower



Egg laying

WHAT DID YOU DO DURING QUARANTINE?



By Adrienne Frank

Gary and I went looking for a rare butterfly called a Frosted Elfin. Actually, we weren't expecting to find it, since the experts haven't been able to find it in our region. However, the experts found caterpillars on the native host plant - - Sundial Lupines.

Near our house, we have a blooming patch of Sundial Lupines. So, we visited the patch several times to look up close at the leaves to look for evidence of tiny caterpillars. We did find a couple of leaves that look like they have been eaten. There were bees and moths using the plant.

On our walk, we had a few good miscellaneous sightings. A female **turkey** was pecking at the ground in a circle and then throwing dust over herself. Later, we took a photo of her dusting spot.

A **scarab** and a dung beetle moving what we think was coyote scat. Do you have an opinion about the scat?



Continued on page 2

We rescued a moth by letting it climb onto a stick (photo on right). Our moth expert friend said it was a *Metarranthia homuraria* (one of the Geometer moths). We could only find the complex of this species in our moth book, so we were glad to have an identification.

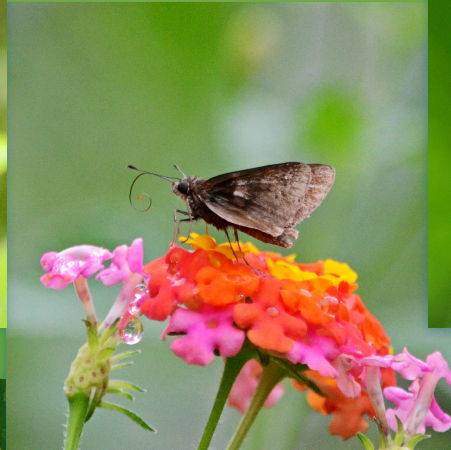
There were a number of butterflies on our walk along the old dirt road. Some of the butterflies only come out in the spring, such as (clockwise from second photo on the right): Henry's Elfin, Falcate Orangetip, and Juvenal's Duskywing.

Since I am always concerned about tick and chigger bites, I decided to make my own chaps/gaiters. I took an approximate measurement and cut an old sheet into a large square (~ 16" x 16" square) to make a tube. I put elastic on the bottom for under my heels and a thin elastic at the top to hold them up. I know it looks a little dorky, but I can cover them with insect repellent and, because they are light in color, I can see anything that lands there.



COMING UP IN BUTTERFLIES:

MAY 2020



Clockwise, top left to right: Least Skipper at Powhatan Creek Trail; Dun Skipper at Settler's Mill; Broad-winged Skipper in New Quarter Park; Clouded Skipper at Powhatan Creek Trail; Delaware Skipper at New Quarter Park.; Appalachian Brown at Powhatan Creek. Photos by Jim Easton.

By Jim Easton

Twenty species of butterflies make their first local appearance in May. (Note, Northern Pearly-eye early date moved from June into May) Be on the lookout for:

Family Papilionidea-Swallowtails:

Pipevine Swallowtail (*Battus philenor*)

Family Lycaenidae-Gossamer-winged Butterflies:

Coral Hairstreak (*Satyrium titus*)

Family Nymphalidae-Brush-footed Butterflies:

- Viceroy (*Limenitis archippus*)
- Hackberry Emperor (*Asterocampa celtis*)
- Appalachian Brown (*Satyroides appalachia*)

- Little Wood-satyr (*Megisto cymela*)
- Northern Pearly-eye (*Enodia anthedon*)
- Southern Pearly-eye (*Enodia portlandia*)
- Creole Pearly-eye (*Enodia creola*)

Sub-family Hesperinae-Grass Skippers

- Swarthy Skipper (*Nastra lherminier*)
- Clouded Skipper (*Lerema accius*)
- Least Skipper (*Ancyloxypha numitor*)
- Little Glassywing (*Pompeius verna*)
- Sachem (*Atalopedes campestris*)
- Delaware Skipper (*Anatrytone logan*)
- Aaron's Skipper (*Poanes aaroni*)
- Broad-winged Skipper (*Poanes viator*)
- Dion Skipper (*Euphyes dion*)
- Dun Skipper (*Euphyes vestris*)
- Salt Marsh Skipper (*Panoquina panoquin*)⁷



Sachem Skipper at Powhatan Creek Trail



Little Glassywing Skipper at Settler's Mill Park



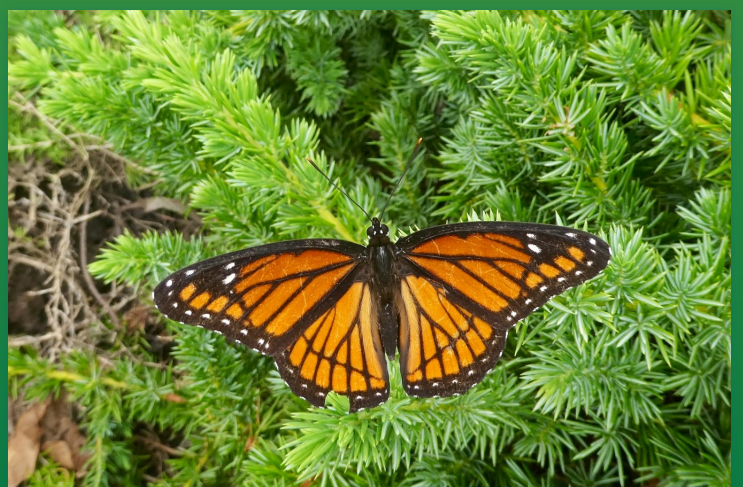
Pipevine Swallowtail at Settler's Mill Park



Northern Pearly-eyed at Powhatan Creek Trail



LittleWood Satyr at Greensprings Trail



Viceroy at Settler's Mill Park

WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH – MAY 2020

JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



By Helen Hamilton

Red Columbine (Aquilegia canadensis) taken by Helen Hamilton

This is one of our loveliest early spring flowers, with hanging red flowers that have long spurs and yellow centers. The nectar at the base of the spurs attracts long-tongued insects and hummingbirds. The flowers are mature when migrating hummingbirds appear in our area, and are important food for these little birds, and for early butterflies and bees as well. Insects seeking the nectar will brush against the extended anthers, collecting pollen to transfer to a neighboring flower with receptive female parts.

Native to eastern U.S., Red Columbine is found in most counties of Virginia, growing wild in roadsides and forest edges. This early, long-blooming (March-May) spring plant forms small clumps about 2 feet tall. Once established, Red Columbine is easy to grow in a woodland garden with moist soil.

This perennial has a light, airy appearance, but is very durable and tolerant of cold weather. The aboveground plant disappears in the fall, but returns each year from the fibrous roots. As the plant self-seeds in early autumn, sprouts will appear the next year in other favorable garden locations, and seeds are easily collected for distribution in other areas. Red Columbine looks wonderful when planted with Golden Ragwort, Confederate (white) Violets, and Wild Blue Phlox.

Attractive, lacy blue-green leaves are compound, divided into round-lobed threes. After the flowers fade, leafminers will leave traces in the leaves but they do not damage the roots of this perennial. When the leaves become unsightly, they can be removed, with no harm to the plant. Deer will avoid Red Columbine as the foliage is toxic.

Sources for Purchasing Native Plants

Garden Centers

Some local garden centers are beginning to carry more native plants.

Ulster American Homestead Garden
4191 Rochambeau Dr, Williamsburg, VA 23188

Forest Lane Botanicals
104 Forest Ln, Williamsburg, VA 23188

Coleman Nursery
3000 Ironbound Rd, Williamsburg, VA 23185

A few larger nurseries with good selections.

Sandys Plants
8011 Bell Creek Rd, Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Southern Branch Nursery
1412 Benefit Rd, Chesapeake, VA 23322

Seeds and Plants Mail Order – *There are numerous sources online. Some carry seeds by the pound.*

Prairie Moon Nursery
32115 Prairie Lane, Winona, MN 55987
<https://www.prairiemoon.com>

John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds
23 Tulip Drive P.O. Box 638 Bantam, CT 06750
<https://www.kitchengardenseeds.com/butterfly-habitat-garden.html>

American Meadows
2438 Shelburne Rd, Shelburne, VT 05482
https://www.americanmeadows.com/wildflower-seeds/northeast/butterfly-hummingbird-wildflower-seed-mix?gclid=EAlaIQobChMlyK7U4lrK6AIVgYvICh25ZAOiEAAYASAAEgK3OPD_BwE

Pinetree Garden Seeds – *A favorite for vegetables and fruit.*
616 Lewiston Rd # A, New Gloucester, ME 04260
<https://www.superseeds.com/collections/flowers/products/bring-in-the-butterflies-collection>

2020 Resources for Native Planting

Plant Sales

John Clayton Chapter of the VA Native Plant Society (postponed to perhaps June 27th)
Williamsburg Botanical Garden
Williamsburg Master Gardeners
Virginia Living Museum
Norfolk Botanical Garden

— *from Adrienne Frank*

Selected Plants for Butterflies and Other Pollinators in the Williamsburg Area

Milkweeds - Nectar & Host Plants

Butterfly weed *
Common Milkweed
Purple Milkweed
Swamp Milkweed

Nectar & Some Host Plants

Asters (Calico, New England, Frost/Old Field, plus)
Beebalm, Scarlet
Bergamot, Wild *
Blazing Star
Brown-eyed Susan/Coneflower, 3-lobed
Cardinal Flower
Coneflower (Orange, Green-headed)
Coreopsis (Tall or Whorled)
Cup Plant *
Golden-alexanders, Common
Indigo, False
Joe-pye-weed (3-nerved or Sweet-scented)
Mistflower
Mountain-mint (Hoary, Narrowleaf) *
Goldenrod (Erect, Flat-top, Wreath, plus)
New York Ironweed
Phlox, Garden or Fall
Senna, Northern Wild *
Spiderwort, Virginia
Sunflower, Narrow-leaved *
Vervain, Blue *
Violets (Common, Arrow-leaf)

NON-Native Nectar Plants

Abelia (shrub) *
Agastache, Blue/Hyssop *
Butterfly Bush (shrub) *
Lantana *
Mexican Sunflower *
White Clover
Verbena, Tall or Brazilian *
Zinnias *

Vines – Nectar & Host

Anglepod, Eastern or Milkvine
Hops, Common
Passionflower, Purple or Yellow
Pipevine, Dutchman's-Pipe
Wisteria, American

Local Butterfly Host Plants

Amaranth (Tidal-marsh, Smooth Pigweed/Green)
Everlastings
Foxglove, Purple False
Indigo, Yellow Wild or Blue
Lamb's Quarters
Legumes
Lupine, Sundial
Mallows (Rose, Seashore)
Mistletoe
Nettles (Wood, False)
Partridge-pe
Plantains
Pussytoes, Plaintain-leaved
Snakeroot, Virginia
Thistles (Field, Yellow)
Vervain, White
Wild Carrot/Queen Anne's Lace
Wild Sensitive Plant

Sedges & Grasses
Reeds/Corgass

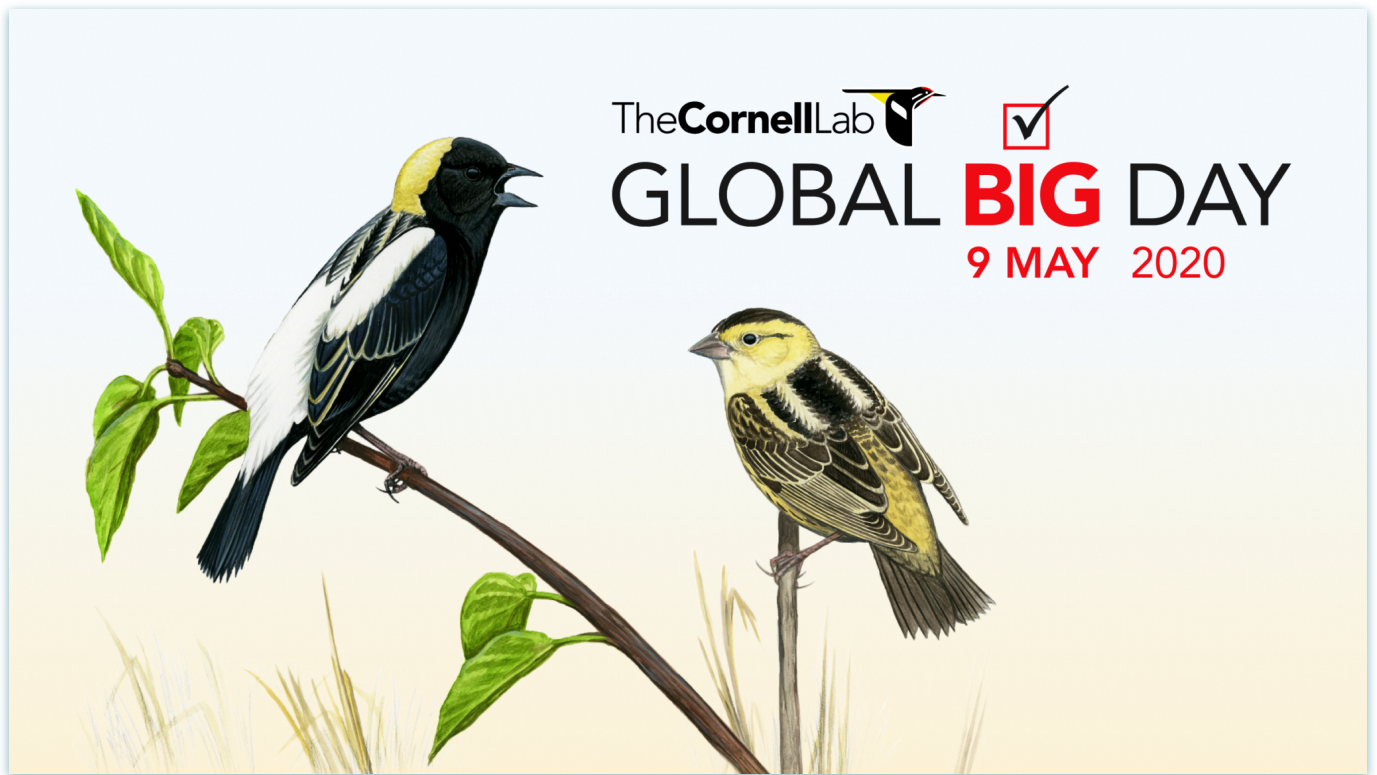
Shrubs – Nectar & Host

Beauty Berry
Black Haw
Blueberries, High or Low
Buttonbush, Common *
Laurels
Red Bay
Sassafras
Spicebush
Sweet Pepperbush/Summer Sweet *
Sweetspire, Virginia

Common Trees

Black Willow
Cottonwood
Elm
Hackberries
Hollies
Oaks
Paw Paw
Red Cedar
Tulip Poplar
Wild Black Cherry
Virginia Pine

*Favorite nectar plants **



On May 9, birding's biggest day is back!

Global Big Day is an annual celebration of the birds around you, and this year is no different. While not everyone may be able to leave home to bird this year, Global Big Day is still an opportunity to check in with the birds in and around where you live. Join us on 9 May and be a part of a global birding community by sharing what birds you see around you with eBird.

Participating is easy. Wherever you are, you can be a part of the global community of birders on 9 May. Please remember to always put safety first and follow all local safety guidelines and closures. You can enjoy birds from inside your home and still be part of Global Big Day.

If you can spare at least 5 or 10 minutes, report your observations to eBird online or with our free eBird Mobile app. If you have more time, submit checklists of birds throughout the day at different times. Can you find more birds in the morning, or the evening? You never know what you might spot. Your observations help us better understand global bird populations through products like these animated abundance maps brought to you by eBird Science.

This year, Global Big Day will focus on the number of checklists we can collect as a global team. Last year, 35,209 eBirders from 174 countries collected an astounding 92,284 checklists in a single day. Will you join us on Global Big Day to make 2020 the year that we surpass 100,000 checklists of birds in one day? Help us set a new checklist record!

How to participate

- **Get an eBird account:** eBird is a worldwide bird checklist program used by millions of birders. It's what allows us to compile everyone's sightings into a single massive Global Big Day list—while at the same time collecting the data to help scientists better understand birds.
- **Sign up [here](#).** It's 100% free from start to finish.

***Hours for this project are
should be registered under C2b.***

***Hat tip to Karen Hines, Judy
Jones and Shirley Devan for
this suggestion.***

***Shan Gill
Volunteer Service Projects
Chair***

FUN FIELD NOTES!



Last week, on Powhatan Creek Trail, I spotted a Tufted titmouse pulling hair off of a napping raccoon. I'm not sure if this is an example of mutual dependence. The titmouse is getting nice soft material for its nest, but is the raccoon getting a much-needed haircut? Or is the titmouse removing insects along with the fur?

— Jim Easton



The May apples and ladyslippers were from Freedom Park. The others were my backyard

— Mona Overturf



Sitting at my computer I can look out the window to see my front garden, my front yard, the neighborhood park, the neighbors' front yards, and backyard of a house on Centerville Road! I'm easily distracted (as some of you know) so I'm always ready to dash out the front door with my camera or binoculars to get a photo or a better look at a bird within the nearest 100 yards.

This afternoon, April 24, a Monarch butterfly spent quite a while flying around my front garden laying eggs on my common milkweed sprouts. Two days ago I had placed markers next to the milkweed sprouts I could ID to make sure I didn't step on them as I weeded out the grass and asiatic dayflower. The Monarch found all of my sprouts plus identified several more for me that have since come up. Here are four photos of the Monarch and her eggs. She laid LOTS of eggs. As you can see, she is very faded and a bit tattered along the edges.

In the age of corona, life today is very good.

— Shirley Devan





Shirley has taken another great photo! Yesterday after her daily walk she stopped by and we opened the box. What a great sight and we were surprised that the babies were so big! Enjoy!

— Barbara Giffin (Babs)



I spotted a pair of Northern Black Racers, again just off Powhatan Creek Trail, earlier in the week.

They were “cuddling”, then made their way home, into a hole in utility structure near the trail.

I’m imagining that after I left, they relaxed, lit cigarettes, and put some Sinatra on the CD player.

— Jim Easton



WHAT TO DO...

Since HRC volunteers are discouraged from working “together” on projects or attending meetings/gatherings, you can earn some HRC hours on projects you can do alone and/or at home — and record in VMS.

With that in mind, Shan Gill and I have assembled a list of projects you can do “alone” with a note or two about each one.

A1c — Chapter newsletter — Lisa Reagan, HRC newsletter editor (hrcnewsletter@gmail.com), would LOVE a note from you about an observation or an adventure PLUS photos. You can prepare a couple of sentences for her (length is really not important!) and send along a photo — or not! Record your time to Project A1c — Chapter Newsletter

C1a1 — Wildlife Mapping “Backyard” — if you record birds and wildlife in your yard or neighborhood **and** enter your observations in eBird or iNaturalist, then you can record hours for Wildlife Mapping in your backyard.

- eBird — easy to set up a free account: <https://ebird.org/home>
- iNaturalist — easy to set up free account: <https://www.inaturalist.org>

C2K — Project FeederWatch. <https://feederwatch.org/join-or-renew/> The 2020 effort for this project ends April 3 so you can still enter your feeder station birds for a few weeks. After April 3, enter your observations in eBird!

C2m - Nature’s Notebook — USA National Phenology Network
https://www.usanpn.org/natures_notebook

C2u — Project Osprey Watch — Contact Cathy Flanagan, flanagan.catherine@gmail.com

C4a — Project Budburst. <http://www.budburst.org>

C4c — Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) — You need a special rain gauge for this project. But you can start any time.

S1e — Williamsburg Botanical Garden Support. Go any time to pull weeds!

S2e — Keep James City County Beautiful — “Team Up 2 Cleanup” — if you’re out meandering around, pick up some litter/trash and dispose of it in your home trash can. It all counts to keeping James City County Beautiful.

S4a — Bassett Trace Nature Trail Stewardship — Go anytime to clear litter and branches from the trail.

THEN REMEMBER TO RECORD YOUR HOURS!

Be safe...we’ll see each other soon I hope.

Shan Gill, Volunteer Service Projects Chair
Shirley Devan, Membership Chair



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 15th of the month for inclusion in the issue distributed to the HRC Google Group by the end 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!