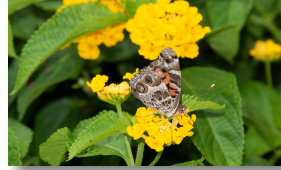




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# THE NATURALIST

THE HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER OF VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS



## The President's Message

By Rick Brown

This month the themes are training and communication. There are several items I am including to encourage you to get and stay involved with the Chapter during these times that limit our personal contact. The Virginia Program Director's office has worked to offer video presentations to promote continuing education. We have circulated other items of interest for naturalists. We want to maintain our contact and relationships within the Chapter so that when we reach the opposite bank, we will all be prepared to start off as we were on March 11, 2020.

1. All of us recently received word from Michelle Prysby that the annual requirements for certification and enrollment have been modified somewhat. Just to be sure you have the information, here is a link to the new requirements: [Revised Requirements for 2020](#)

2. As Master Naturalists we are required to certify that we have reviewed the state's Risk Management Guidelines



*This Ruby-throated Hummingbird seems to be saying, "I haven't been measuring, but It seems like a lot of rain to me!"*

periodically. In order to make this information available to our members a presentation will be made at the next Zoom Chapter meeting on September 9th. Our speaker will be Michelle Prysby, the Program Director for the VMN. Her presentation has been arranged by Roger Gosden and Patty Maloney, our Risk Management coordinators and it is very important that everyone

*Continued on page 2*

## The President's Letter, continued...

make an effort to attend that meeting so we can collectively reaffirm that we have indeed had this training. This is a Beta test for the program that Michelle will be sending to all the other chapters in Virginia. A recording will be made of the presentation and those who were not able to attend will be required to watch it to later verify that you have received this training. Please reserve September 9th at 6:30 pm on your calendars.

3. During the Coronavirus quarantine the HRC board has made a real effort to reach out to the membership to keep us all connected and involved in Chapter activities and news. We have the unenviable task of maintaining the collective interest level. We encourage everyone to communicate with natural observations and news that may be of interest to all of us. The Zoom meetings are poor substitute for personal contact but **they have** allowed us to get together virtually throughout this period....

4. If any of you have questions or problems with making connections using Zoom, please let me know. Connections can be made using a computer terminal, laptop, smart pads, and phones. **I have scheduled a Zoom practice meeting for anyone who would like to practice using the technology. Join me on Friday, September 4th, at 3:00 PM, if you would like to participate.** The invitation was sent by e-mail to the entire chapter. It's easy and a great way to connect with your fellow members.

5. Many of our projects have continued to operate with limitations. If you have photos of your HRC volunteer work or the fruits of that work, please forward them to me so that we can share them with the other members. Many of you are already using our Google listserv and we encourage you to continue to share your experiences with the group.

6. Several board members and John Gresham met virtually with Meagan Thomas, a wildlife biologist with the Department of Wildlife Resources. Meagan was brought to our attention by the State Coordinator's office as a potential candidate to be a Co-Advisor for our chapter. We were very impressed with her background and ideas for ways to assist our project various projects. **Included below is additional information about Meagan and the work she does for the Virginia Watchable Wildlife program.**

Thanks for all your efforts during these past months. We look forward to the day when science will provide us with the protection that allows us to once again gather and work on those things that we all enjoy doing, together. Until then, stay well and take care of each other.



### 2021 Beautiful York County Calendar Contest

Thirteen winners will be selected to appear in the calendar - one for each month and the cover - with each winner receiving \$100! Photographs should be of pollinators and reflect the beauty of York County.

**The deadline to submit your photos is Thursday, October 1.**

Photos are then judged by the York County Beautification Committee based on the quality of the image and its adherence to the calendar's theme.

All York County citizens are eligible to participate (submissions must be made by individuals who are not photographers by trade; business photos are not accepted).

Individuals submitting on behalf of a minor should list both their name and the minor's name. Submissions must include an address for verification of residency. Addresses will not be listed in the calendar.

Complete rules and the photo submission form are available at [www.yorkcounty.gov/contest](http://www.yorkcounty.gov/contest).

Be sure to check the requirements for photo size, orientation, and submission details.

# WHAT IS WATCHABLE WILDLIFE?

## MEET MEAGAN THOMAS

**Watchable Wildlife** enhances, elevates and promotes wildlife viewing and nature appreciation for the benefit of society, while building community awareness, understanding and support for the conservation of the wildlife and habitats upon which these activities depend.

### Respect Virginia's Wildlife

The first key to wildlife watching is understanding how to do it responsibly. Respect Virginia's Wildlife explains the best ways to get the most out of your wildlife viewing trips. When wildlife watching always keep in mind, you are the visitor!

### History and Overview

Virginia's Watchable Wildlife Program began in 2001. While the most notable accomplishment in the first years has been the development of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, many other areas have and are being addressed by Department staff. The major program areas are:

- Providing Technical Assistance to both public and private land stewards to improve their land for wildlife viewing
- Addressing urban wildlife issues through workshops, publications, and web-based information
- Sponsoring and/or attending wildlife-related events
- Coordinating the Department's WildlifeMapping Program
- Coordinating DGIF sponsorship of Virginia's Master Naturalist Program

Projects such as the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail provide Virginians with opportunities to view wildlife across the Commonwealth. Promoting and fostering education about wildlife and getting people out to see it are key to getting people involved in wildlife conservation. Finally, the more people know about wildlife and wildlife-human interactions, the safer everyone will be, which benefits both people and wildlife.

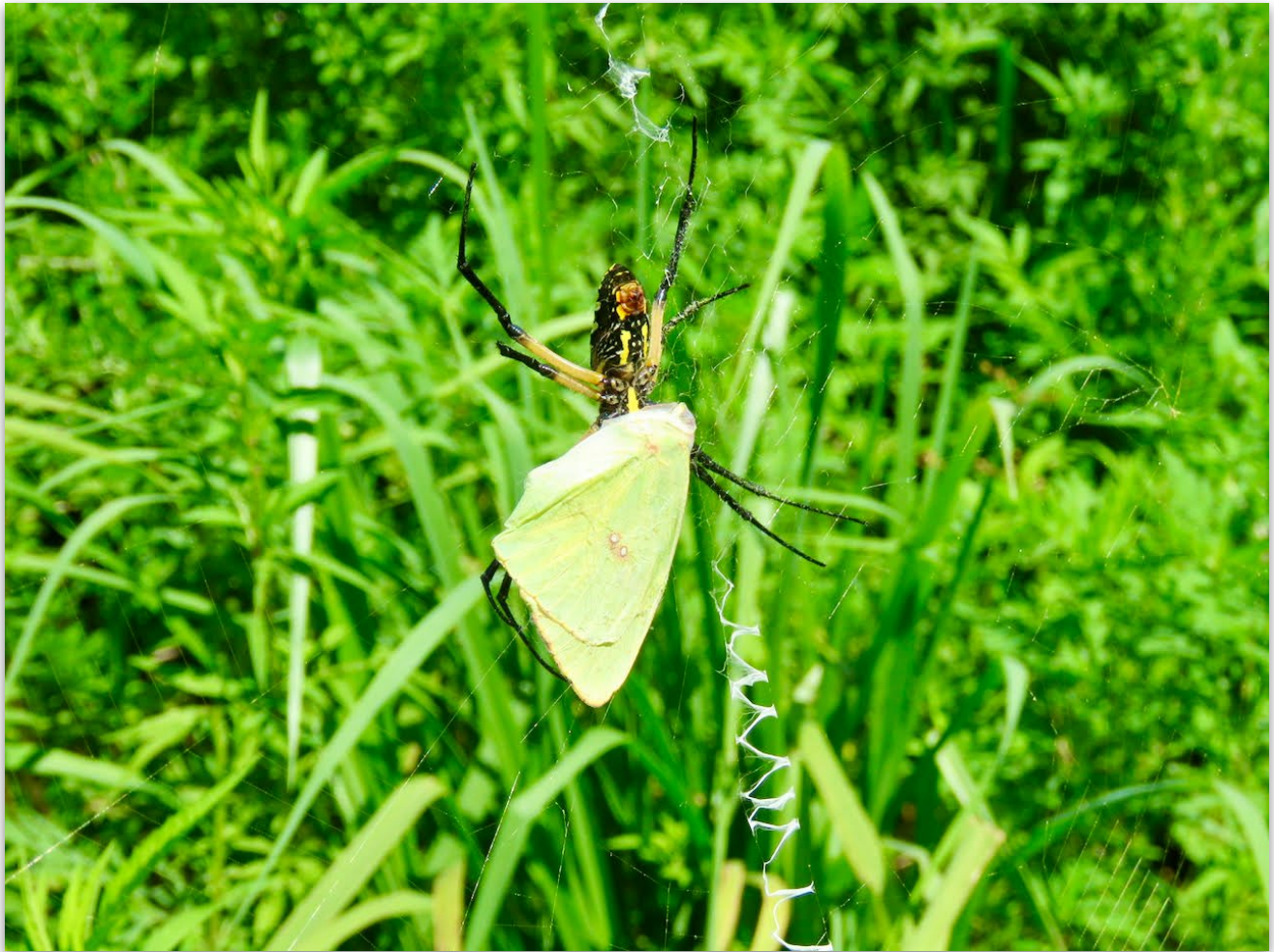
The Department's Watchable Wildlife Program is just one of many such programs in state fish and wildlife agencies across the United States.



Meagan Thomas is DGIF's newest watchable wildlife biologist who, along with Jessica Ruthenberg, will be leading Virginia's Watchable Wildlife Program. Prior to her employment with DGIF, Meagan worked as a human-wildlife interactions biologist for the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission where she developed a variety of programs and materials centered on fostering positive wildlife interactions for constituents.

Before that, Meagan coordinated research and education efforts related to reptile and amphibian conservation in the Southeast as the research manager for Davidson College. She brings with her a wealth of knowledge for creating effective citizen science and outreach programs, especially related to non-game species of wildlife. She obtained her M.S. degree in Biological Sciences at Eastern Illinois University where she conducted her thesis on snake dietary ecology. Additionally, she received two B.S. degrees from Towson University, majoring in Organismal Biology and Ecology as well as Animal Behavior.





*Spider has trapped butterfly in web. Yellow Garden Spider *Argiope aurantia* and Cloudless Sulphur *Phoebis sennae**

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## NATURALIZING WHEN IT FEELS LIKE 101

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By Shirley Devan

August 10, 2020: 11:44 am text: Neighbor and HRC Master Naturalist Babs Giffin texted me late-morning about exploring around Warhill. I could not get away until after 1:30. So I texted back: “Let’s go at 2 when it’s REALLY HOT.”

So, we met at Warhill at 2 pm, and the heat index was pretty high already. And wearing a mask made it even hotter! We were social distancing too. By mid-afternoon not many other souls were venturing out in the heat, and gardeners had completed their daily harvests in the Community Garden.

The Warhill complex has numerous trails to explore, and it’s impossible to cover all in one outing. We had decided to limit our outing to two hours – the hottest part of the day! We certainly were not racing around. Leisurely naturalizing was the plan – and pausing in the shadows was a cooling tactic. We each had binoculars and water, and I had my camera on a monopod. By the time we got back to our cars, the heat index was 101. Whew! Here are a few photos of the natural treasures we found.

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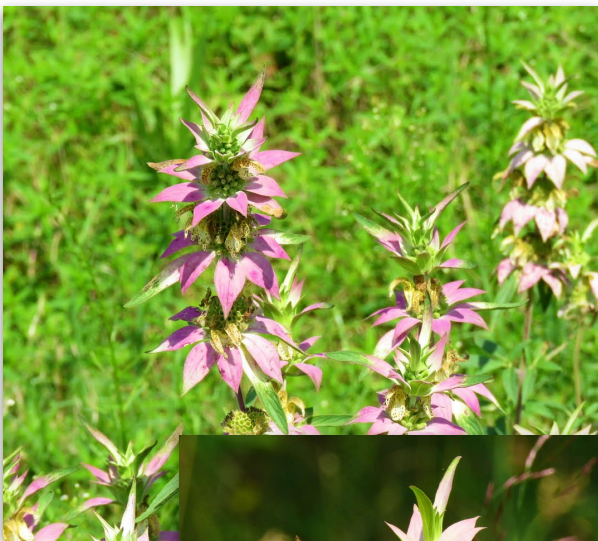
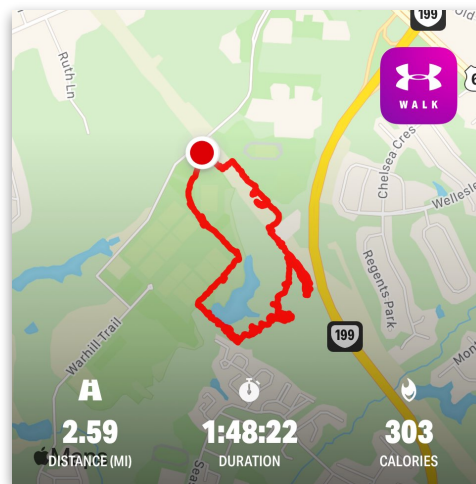
*Osprey chicks still on nest, Pandion haliaetus*



*Differential Grasshopper Melanoplus differentialis. Female larger than male*

## ***Naturalizing When It Feels Like 101***

***Photos by Shirley Devan***



***Spotted Bee Balm. Monarda punctata***



***Luna Moth on a stick***





*American Lady Vanessa virginiensis. By Seig Kopinitz*

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## SUMMARY OF THE WILLIAMSBURG AREA BUTTERFLY COUNT

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By Adrienne Frank

What a wonderful success for the 7<sup>th</sup> year of our Williamsburg Area count. Go team! There were 43 participants, and we surpassed the previous high of 40 participants from last year. We had several visitors from other nearby counties. Our chapter has developed a model for Master Naturalist chapters and each year we create more interest in butterflies and native plants.

We identified **50** species and **1722** individuals. Our species count was about average for the 7 years of counts. However, it seemed low if you compare it to last year's count of 53 species and 3037 individuals. We had 50 observed out of 63 butterflies ever recorded on our counts.

This year, three species of Swallowtails had all-time highs; these were the most Zebra (52), Black (40), and Spicebush (101) that we have ever recorded on a count. The species with the highest number of individuals was the Common Buckeye (284 observed). There were 2 typical species missing: Question Mark and Common Sootywing.

Of course, this year's count was different than in years past due to COVID 19. We divided our team into 16 small parties (average of <3 each). Typically, we had 5 teams of about 5 or 6 people. We also explored new areas in the circle covered, with some results better than others. Most people were out in the field for more than 5 hours.

Here are some highlights, compiled into our six sectors.

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**Upper York Sector** – The team included Les Lawrence (Leader), Ginny Broome, Karen Hines, Alice Kopinitz, and Seig Kopinitz. They meet with Charlie Whalen, the new manager of York River State Park, who joined them butterflying for more than an hour. They counted 24 species and 117 individuals. A new area of the Upper York Sector was counted, the Ware Creek Wildlife Management Area, which is at the very top of our circle. Allen Belden found 14 species there, including 14 Black Swallowtails, Red Admiral, Northern Broken-dash, and Swarthy Skipper, which were added to the sector's count, bringing the total to 28.

**Lower York** – Jan Lockwood (Leader) went off on her as a voluntary quarantine, while Ken Lorenzen and two other non-chapter members surveyed New Quarter Park. Overcast conditions and rain showers affected their count. However, they found the only Clouded Sulphur, Northern Pearly-eye, and Aaron's Skipper for the day. New Quarter is typically where we find woodland and salt marsh species. This team also found 6 Monarch caterpillars on Common Milkweed at the Magruder School garden.

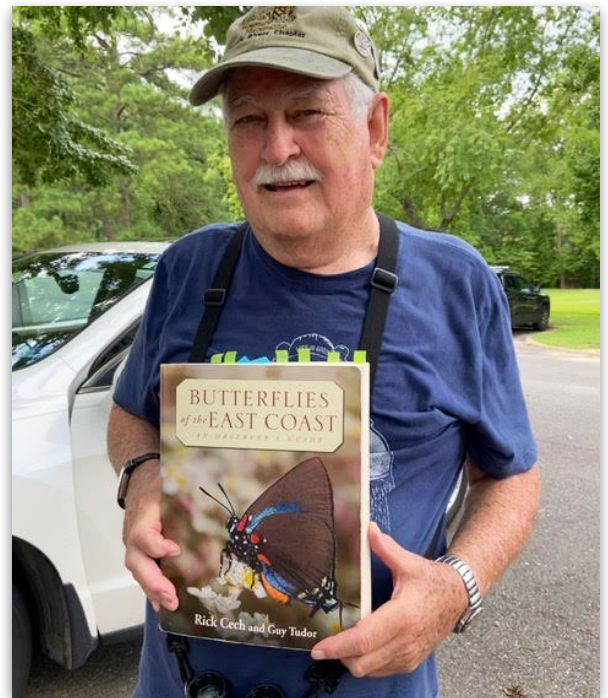
**Williamsburg City** – Deane Gordon (Leader), Teta Kain, Sherry Brubaker, and Mary Haines covered Colonial Williamsburg. At the Governor's Palace, they found a tree with dripping sap that had Hackberry Emperors, Red Admirals, and a Red-spotted Purple wicking up nutrients. In addition, Jeanette and Keith Navia explored Bassett Trace and several new areas in the City, where they found a Common Buckeye caterpillar and added to the high sector numbers for Fiery Skippers (82) and Horace's Duskywings (14 out of 17 total).

**Centerville Corridor** – This sector was divided into multiple areas. Shirley Devan (Leader), Nancy Barnhart, Babs Giffin, and Joanne Sheffield were included in one group. They covered a new area, Jolly Pond, and found 6 species there. They covered the Lavender Farm, Colonial Heritage, and part of the Warhill Tract. This team yielded the only 2 Appalachian Brown and had the high count for Common Buckeye (142).

Freedom Park and the Warhill Tract were surveyed by Brian Taber and 3 Master Naturalists from the Northern Neck. The visitors have started doing multiple butterfly counts in the their counties and want to learn as much as they can. This group had the only Tawny-edged Skipper and Dion Skipper, and the high count for Variegated Fritillaries (32). At Warhill, under the powerlines there is a lot of Passionvine, the host plant for the Variegated Fritillary.

Two HRC members were new to the count and were courageous going out on their own, in areas not typically covered by our count. Roxanne Machamer covered some

*Continued on next page...*



***Les Lawrence at York River State Park. By Ginny Broome***



***An Appalachian Brown taken by Bill Blair in the Gloucester Sector***



***Aaron's Skipper in New Quarter Park. By Jan Lockwood***

areas around Ford's Colony and Williamsburg West. Linda Cole covered the Williamsburg Memorial Park and other areas off of Richmond Road. They observed 8 species for the count.

**Gloucester** - This year was the first time that we counted across the York River, in our outer portion of the circle. Susan Crockett and 8 others from Gloucester and Matthews covered the sector. They had 19 species, including 1 of only 2 Northern Broken Dash skippers. Susan said, "Shawn spotted the Appalachian Brown, and then 7 of us followed it around for at least 5 minutes with cameras and guide books debating on the identification. Such fun! We were very appreciative of the homeowners that invited us to count on their properties. The count would not have been a success without those beautiful gardens to invade."

**Upper James City County** – Lastly, Gary and I led this sector count. We had help with two areas. Susan & Mike Powell and their friend Jackie covered their property and another property along Forge Road. They had large numbers of Common Buckeye (74) and Monarchs (24). Allen Belden covered KelRae Farm which had large numbers of Spicebush Swallowtails and the highest numbers for Cabbage White and Orange Sulphur. Gary and I found the only Comma (1), Wood Nymphs (4), and Southern Cloudywings (3). Homestead Garden center had quite a few skippers and dill plants with Black Swallowtail caterpillars.

When we submitted our data to the North American Butterfly Association (NABA), they asked what were the imminent threats to habitat. We listed several including increasing rate of development, residential areas lack native and nectar plants, fewer farm fields and country roads, and increasing invasive species (esp. Stilt grass). Lastly, this spring's roller coaster temperatures and a late freeze seemed to affect butterfly population significantly this year.

This year, we did not charge a \$3 fee for participation, instead we had three donors who covered the cost. All three are members of the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, which is a co-sponsor with our Historic Rivers Chapter of the VMN. It is delightful to have such generous friends.

Thank you all who participated and made our count so worthwhile and fun.



*Tawny-edged Skipper taken by Brian Taber, at Freedom Park. This is a very small skipper and often difficult to photograph and identify.*



*Appalachian Brown on WISC Trail, By Nancy Barnhart*



*Pearl Crescent with friend on Queen Anne's Lace. By Nancy Barnhart*

*Continued on next page...*



The following are the totals submitted to NABA.

**Williamsburg, VA.** Yr. 7, 37.3563°, -76.7383°, center at 2000 ft. NW of jct. of Rt. 199 and I-64.  
**08 August 2020;** 0900-1600 hrs; sun AM 76-100%, PM 51-75%; 78-93°F; wind 0-5 mi/hr.

**Zebra Swallowtail 52, Black Sw. 40,** E. Tiger Sw. 238, **Spicebush Sw. 101,** Cabbage White 7, Clouded Sulphur 1, Orange Su. 8, Cloudless Su. 62, Sleepy Orange 24, Gray Hairstreak 10, Red-banded Hairstreak. 4, E. Tailed-Blue 66, Azure 30, American. Snout 3, Variegated Fritillary 32, Pearl Crescent 65, E. Comma 1, American. Lady 28, Painted Lady 1, Red Admiral 4, Common Buckeye 284, Red-spotted Purple 3, Hackberry Emperor 2, Northern Pearly-eye 1, Appalachian Brown 3, Gemmed Satyr 3, Carolina Satyr. 5, Common Wood-Nymph 4, Monarch 84, Silver-spotted Skipper 200, Long-tailed Sk. 1, Southern Cloudywing 3, Horace's Duskywing 17, Swarthy Sk. 3, Clouded Sk. 2, Least Sk. 23, Fiery Sk. 146, Tawny-edged Sk. 1, S. Broken-Dash 5, N. Broken-Dash 2, Little Glassywing 48, Sachem 25, Delaware Sk. 9, Zabulon Sk. 43, Aaron's Sk. 1, Broad-winged Sk. 4, Dion Sk. 1, Dun Sk. 4, Salt Marsh Sk. 5, Ocola Sk. 13.

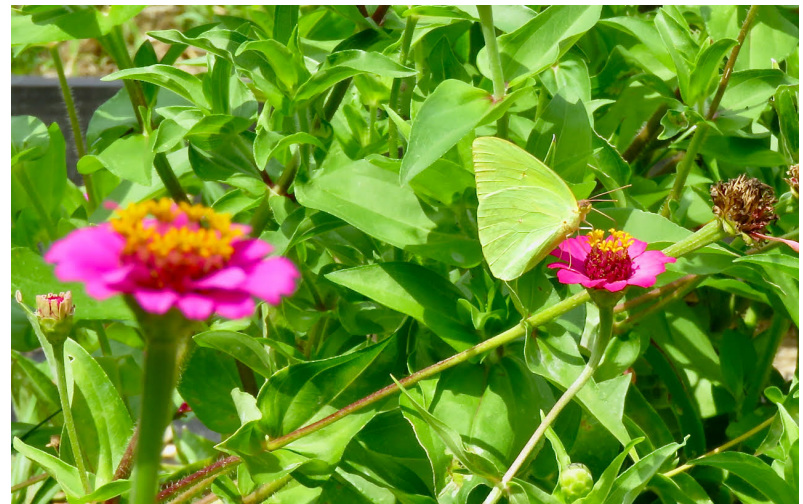
**Total** 50 species, 1722 individuals. **Immatures:** Black Sw. 10 caterpillars; Com. Bu. 1 caterpillar; Monarch 6 caterpillars.



*Swarthy Skipper. By Jan Lockwood*



*This photo of Spicebush Swallowtail taken while we were surveying the Jolly Pond area on the butterfly count.  
 By Shirley Devan*



*Cloudless Sulphur was on a zinnia at the SweetHaven Lavender Farm. By Shirley Devan*



*Fiery Skipper, by Nancy Barnhart*



# FUN FIELD NOTES



*Lots of drama in my pollinator garden, including this battle that did not end well for the Little Glassywing skipper. I initially saw thrashing around on a leaf. I could see the skipper with my bare eyes but the mantid was well camouflaged. I rushed to get my camera and when I returned the thrashing was over and the mantid had won. I got this photo when I turned the leaf over. Mantids will eat anything they can catch! Notice a chunk of the skipper's wing is missing.  
By Shirley Devan*



*We were beginning to get worried in early summer when we saw few butterflies, but lots of dragonflies. After the August gully washers, the butterflies and skippers seem to return. Great Blue Skimmer (Libellula vibrans) on the left and Silver-spotted Skipper (Epargyreus clarus) on the right. By Lisa Reagan*





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# PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

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## NESTS AND NESTLINGS

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Hart Haynes

Nests and Nestlings



Shirley Devan

Nests and Nestlings



Inge Curtis – Nests and Nestlings



Patty Maloney – Nests and Nestlings



Judy Jones

Nests and Nestlings



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# PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

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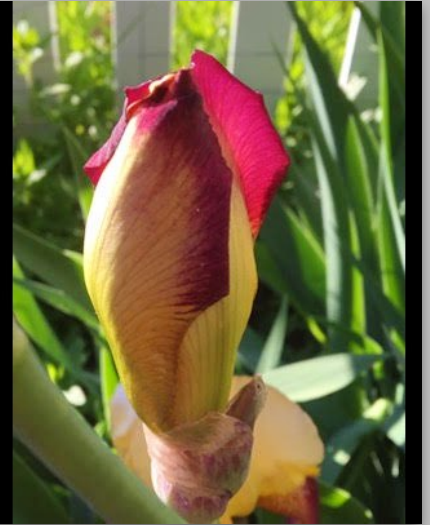
## FLORA

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Kathi Mestayer – Flora



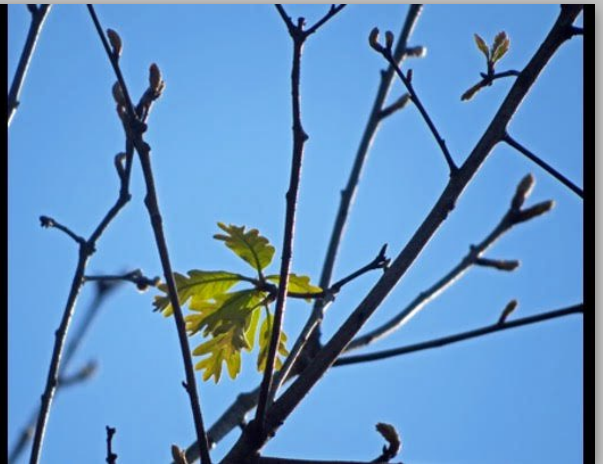
Joe Beene – Flora



Jeanette Navia  
Flora



Patty Maloney  
Flora



Kathi Mestayer – Flora





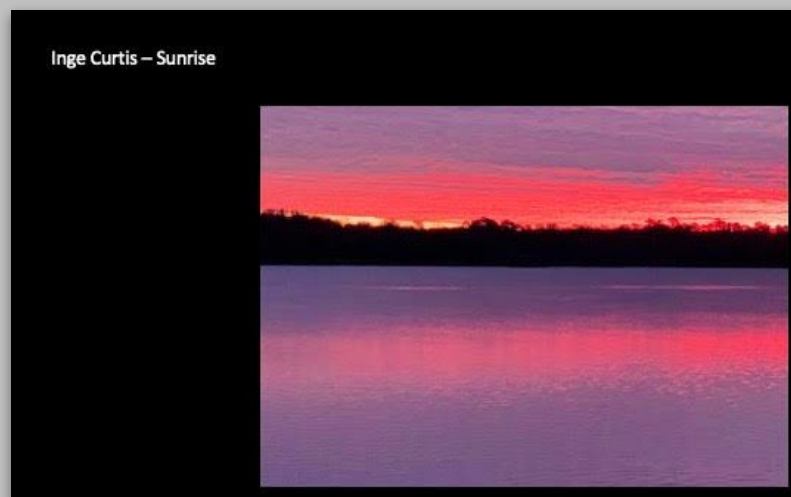
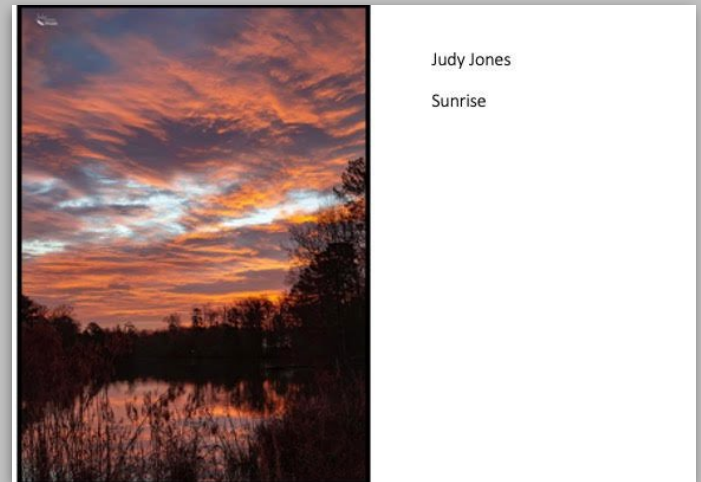
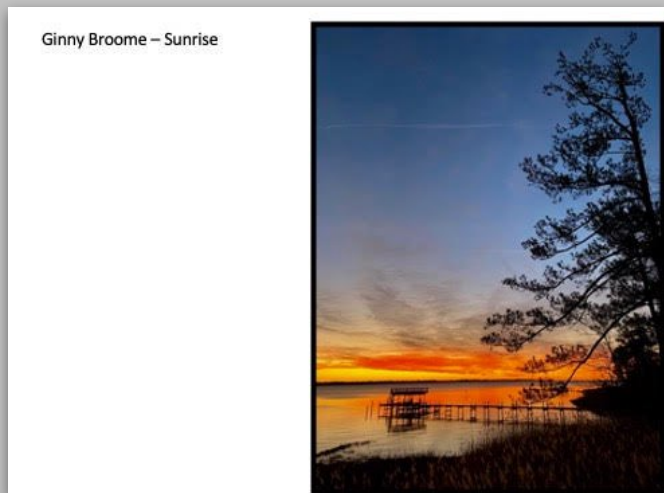
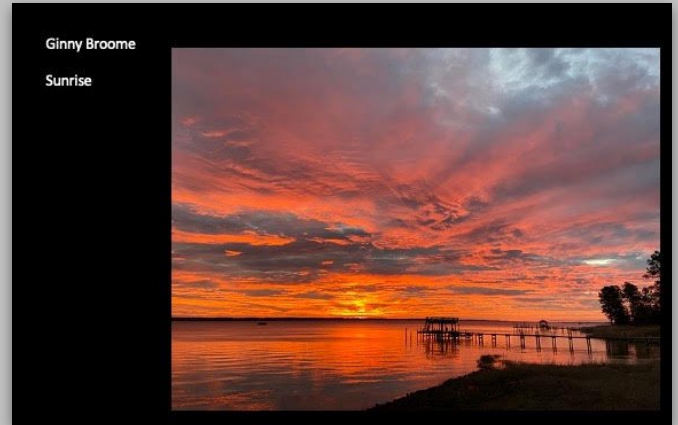
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# PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

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## SUNRISE

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# PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

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## FAUNA

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Carol Ely  
Fauna



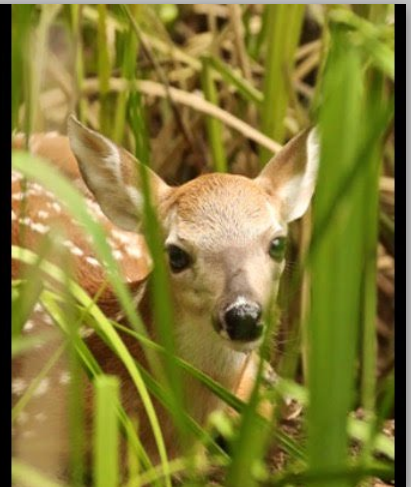
Stephanie Schmuck  
Fauna



Kathi Mestayer – Fauna



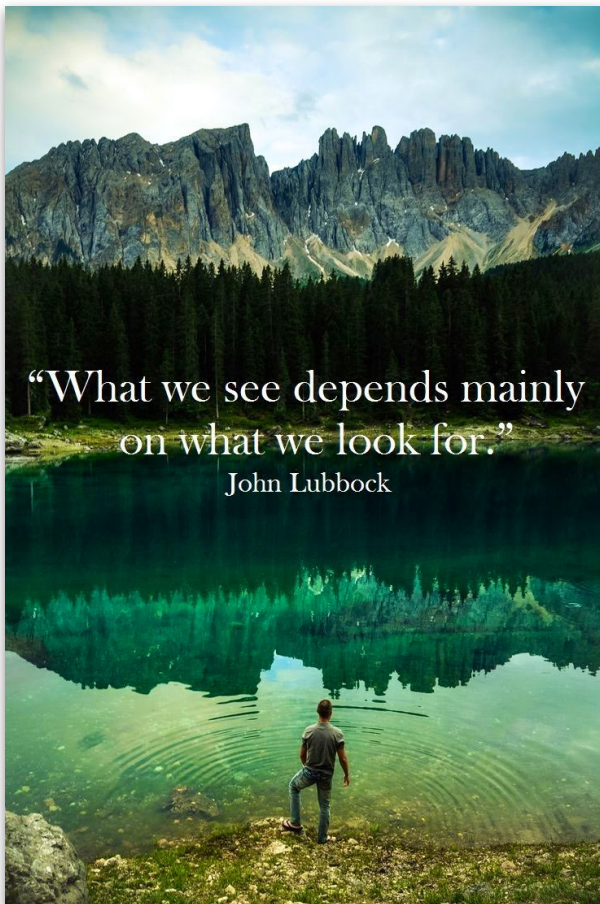
Inge Curtis – Fauna



Wendy Nelson – Fauna







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](mailto: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!

### Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists Board of Directors

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