

The Naturalist

May 2023 Newsletter | Volume 19, Number 5

Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists

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A Message from the President

by Connie Reitz

June often brings closing doors and openings for new opportunities. School days end and the excitement of the fun-filled (and lazy) days of summer begin. Who doesn't remember the countdown of days until school ended?! If you need a reminder, please ask a school aged child in your neighborhood. You'll see a face light up and the start of a litany of things planned for the days of summer break.

This can apply to master naturalists, also. Basic training for Cohort XVI has finished and now these members are out joining others on projects. Some of these cohort members have grasped opportunities in the chapter by championing a project or volunteering to serve in a leadership position on our board. The enthusiasm is infectious and makes all of us want to join in the fun of volunteering.

Maybe you didn't just finish training but what are you doing to fill those summer days? Bird activities are always a popular volunteer option. There are bats and warblers, osprey and turkeys, bluebirds, and purple martins. Wildlife mapping is offered at least once a week every week. While mapping may have birds as the most numerous species counted, there are other things to be seen. Are the turtles

sitting on logs sunning, only to disappear as you are ready to take a photo for identification? Are the beavers building bigger and higher? Is the river otter out in the pond or back in the river? And can you find the snake in the grass?

Flora may offer an easier group for identification. At least this group seems to stay still for a photo and don't wander from the last place you saw the specimen. Well, if you can remember where you were! There are gardens which need support for maintenance and the never-ending job of pulling invasives is a great option for group fun. The Clifton Institute Native Seed Project is starting. Maybe you have done the training for this activity of collecting seed from a selection of targeted native plants for the purpose of establishing a viable native seed

industry in Virginia to enhance pollinator habitat restoration. How exciting.

Trails and Trash offer several sites for cleaning and protecting our environment. Join a group at one of the adopted parks or trails. Keep a grabber and bag in your vehicle so you're ready to gather litter as you walk a trail in your neighborhood or somewhere in one of our many parks. Members who enjoy activities on the different bodies of water in our area have a special opportunity to gather litter, fishing line, and bobbers before these get washed even farther downstream.

So, what are you doing this summer? And did you invite someone to join you?

On the Calendar

See Better Impact Opportunity Calendar and HRC Google Group for all opportunities.

Thursday	June 8	CE Purple Martin Colony 6pm Chickahominy Riverfront Park with Bird Club
Saturday	June 10	Paddle Round the Island 7-11am at Chickahominy Riverfront Park
Saturday	June 10	Litter Pick-up 9-10:30am at Greensprings Trail
Saturday	June 10	Marine Science Day 10am-3pm at Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Sunday	June 11	Volunteer at Dragon Run 9am-1pm on Middle Peninsula
Tuesday	June 13	Wildlife Mapping 8:30-11:30am at New Quarter Park
Wednesday	June 14	Native Plant Management 10am-2pm at Presquile (Island) NWR
Wednesday	June 14	Litter Pick-up 10:30-11:30am at Powhatan Creek Park
Saturday	June 17	CE Cypress Creek Living Shoreline 2pm Windsor Castle Park, Smithfield with James River Association and Historic Southside VMN
Sunday	June 18	CE Bird Walk 7am at Newport News City Park with Hampton Roads Bird Club
Wednesday	June 21	**HRC Summer Solstice Social** at Waller Mill Park
Saturday	June 24	CE Bird Walk 8-10am at New Quarter Park with Williamsburg Bird Club



HRC Summer Solstice Social

Wednesday, June 21

5:30-7:30 p.m. at Waller Mill Park

Families are invited! Free Parking! Look for a SignUp soon to let us know if you're coming and how many of you there will be! We're looking forward to seeing you as we celebrate the first day of summer. Oh yeah...sprinkles, bananas, whipped cream, strawberries, cherries will be involved! There's also a rumor about hot fudge.

Annual Photography Contest: June 18 Deadline

Historic Rivers Chapter (HRC) Master Naturalists are invited to participate in the annual HRC Photography Contest. We hope that you and your camera/phone have been able to capture some wonderful shots over the past year and are willing to submit them for display at the Williamsburg Regional Library. Photos taken in Virginia between last June (2022) and Sunday, June 18, 2023, are eligible for submission. Photos should be sized to 8x10 and 300 dpi. All submissions, up to three per category, should be clearly labeled with your first initial, last name and category. Email your submissions no later than June 18th to Judy Jones. If you need help resizing, please let her know. Those photos selected by the three judges as best will be printed, framed, and hung in the Williamsburg Library Gallery on July 17th. ****All official guidelines found in the [HRC Google Group](#)****



Photo: Judy Jones, Master Naturalist, with camera in tow.
Photographer credit: Donnie Goodrich.

Five photography categories:

NATIVE FLORA. These pictures can be of flowers, leaves, mushrooms, etc. but must be of plants native to Virginia.

FAUNA – NOT BIRDS.

FAUNA – BIRDS.

BEFORE AND AFTER. An entry is composed of two pictures taken from the same viewpoint but taken no more than 48 hours apart. Think of low tide beside high tide, sunrise beside sunset, a flower's morning bud beside the next day's bloom. These pictures should be related to nature. For example, a picture of a skyscraper beside a picture following its implosion would

certainly relate before and after but it would not be related to nature, whereas a picture of a wooded lot before and after clear-cutting or fire would. Be creative and imaginative. Each contestant is allowed to submit three pairs of pictures.

MASTER NATURALISTS AT WORK. One of the purposes of our photo display is to share with the world the skill and talent of our Chapter's photographers. But a second purpose is to share with the gallery's visitors some of the enthusiasm, excitement, and energy we find in our outdoor activities. We hope that this category will provide a little peek into the world of an HRC member at work. When selecting your photos, think about how we can share with others the joy we discover in nature.

Basic Training Application Open: June 1-30

We hope you'll spread the word to your friends and neighbors about our Basic Training class beginning September 5. Many of our new members come to us by word of mouth so we're counting on you! Encourage your friends to check out the info on our chapter website at historicrivers.org/become-a-virginia-master-naturalist/. Online applications are accepted during the month of June and trainees will be able to pay the fee online. A comprehensive "**Frequently Asked Questions**" document is on the website.

Summer Save the Dates

CE at New Quarter Park

1000 Lakeshead Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23185

Sign up at least 2 days before the FREE events listed below with [York County Recreation](#). Be sure to record the 2-hour continuing education (CE) in Better Impact after you attend. You can learn more about this 545-acre park tucked between Queens Lake and the Colonial Parkway at their [website](#). Park staff and restroom facilities are available from 8am till dusk each day during the summer.

Friday Evening Programs

6:30-8:30pm

June 9	How to Birdwatch with Williamsburg Bird Club
June 23	Oysters with Jess Small, VIMS
July 14	Intro to Nature Photography with Jim Easton, HRC MN
July 28	Fish of the Chesapeake Bay with Jenny Dreyer, VIMS

Saturday Bird Walks

8am-10am

June 24	Hosted by Williamsburg Bird Club Binoculars are available on loan at the park's office.
July 22	

Saturday Walk and Talks

10am-12pm

June 17	Snakes with Tim Christenson
June 24	Fossils with Dr. Rowan Lockwood, W&M
August 19	Insects with Tim Christenson



Photos above: New Quarter Park May finds by Claire White: Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), Magnolia Green Jumping Spider (*Lyssomanes viridis*), male flowers of American Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), and Red-banded leafhopper (*Graphocephala coccinea*).

Summer Webinar Series from Peninsula Chapter VMN

Wednesday Evening Programs, 6:00-8:00pm



The focus of this course is on species and their habitat which are under threat – species that may be endangered, threatened, diminished or not as prevalent as it used to be. The course is over Zoom, with two topics per night. The link for all the sessions is the same. Use the QR code or link to join:

virginiatech.zoom.us/j/89737059294

JUNE 7	Keynote on Species and Habitat with Stephen Living, VA Dept. of Wildlife Resources Eastern Hemlock and the Woolly Adelgid with Jaet Stephens, Christopher Newport University
JUNE 21	Blue Crabs with TBA Red Cockaded Woodpecker and Longleaf Pine with Clare Bruckner, The Nature Conservancy
July 5	Oysters with Julie Luecke, Chesapeake Bay Found. Ash Trees & Emerald Ash Borer with Katlin Dewit, VA Dept. of Forestry
JULY 19	Piping Plover & Shorebird Conservation with Ruth Boettcher, VA Dept. of Wildlife Resources Sturgeon with Erin Reilly, James River Association
AUG 2	Red Wolf with Katerina Ramos, North Carolina Wildlife Federation Gray and Little Brown Bats with Danielle Nissen, <i>Today's Bag</i> blog
AUG 16	Status of Butterflies and Habitat with Karen McCurdy, Butterfly Society of Virginia Bees and their Habitat with Nathan Brauner, Colonial Bee-Keepers



Third Annual Pawpaw Festival Historic Endview, Newport News

**Saturday, August 26
10am-4pm**

Celebrate one of Virginia's native fruits (*Asimina triloba*). Free tastings and raffles for pawpaw saplings. Live music, food, and kids' activities.

*Guided tours of 1769
Historic House with fee.

Educational booths and talks by Butterfly Society of Virginia, Colonial Bee-Keepers, Peninsula Tree Stewards, Hampton Roads Bird Club, Newport News Waterworks, Peninsula Master Naturalists, Leave No Trace, and Foxy Lady Press.

A Story with a Happy Ending by Judy Jones



On May 2, the bluebirding team of Elizabeth Myers, Jim Leech, Judy Jones, and Marie Robertson met in the parking lot of the Chickahominy Riverfront Park, ready to do the bluebird thing. However, our attention was caught almost immediately by a Barn Swallow, sitting in the middle of the entry road (pictured top left), fluttering furiously but unable to lift into the air and fly. We quickly discovered that it was an injured male and needed some medical care. Under the guidance of [Tidewater Wildlife Rescue](#) and Julie Wobig's expertise, we gently lifted him up in a towel, put him in a paper bag, and Marie volunteered to drive him to the closest rehabber, Julia Genard. Julia gave the swallow triage care and then sent him on to our own master rehabber, Deb Woodward, who, with care, skill, and expertise, began the process of helping the little guy to heal.



Fast forward one month, and we were once again meeting at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, but this time for the release of this beautiful bird. After 30+ days of Deb's dedicated care, the Barn Swallow was ready to 'fly the coop', so to speak. So, Deb brought him back to the park and Elizabeth (pictured left) carefully lifted the lid to let him soar. And soar he did, flying up immediately and cruising well above our heads. The best part of this success story is that, once in the air, another swallow cruised right over to him, almost like it was saying, "Hey, where you been?"



Many thanks to Julia, Julie, and the incredible Deb Woodward (pictured bottom right). Deb spent hours each day helping this small bird and many, many others to heal and return to the wild. We are so lucky to have folks like her who donate their time, energy, and monies to making our world a better place!

Need to find a Licensed Virginia Wildlife Rehabilitator?

Deborah Woodard (located in New Kent) and others are listed on the [Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources](#) comprehensive and up-to-date webpage.

[Animal Help Now](#) is website (and app) that can help you find assistance nearby for a wildlife emergency or conflict based using your zip code or address.

HRC Tree Stewards: Graduation at Mariner's Museum by Rick Brown



The VMN Historic River's Chapter is pleased to announce the graduation on May 6, 2023, of 38 new Tree

Stewards from the Virginia Master Naturalist Tree Steward Training Course held here on the middle peninsula. The final field training exercise and graduation were held at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News. There were 30 trainees, plus 8 members of the steering committee, who completed the course. This was the first ever Tree Steward course conducted by and for Virginia Master Naturalists.

The joint-training was sponsored by the Historic Rivers and Peninsula Chapters of the Virginia Master Naturalists and each group will constitute a separate Tree Steward Chapter in the Virginia Trees organization for the purpose of sponsoring volunteer projects, although a good deal of cross pollination is expected to occur between the chapters given the friendships that developed during training and the physical location of projects that are close to the operational areas of each chapters.

The new Tree Stewards are expected to lead tree related projects that will be open to all members of their respective chapters.



Pictured above, new HRC Tree Stewards.

Front row, left to right: Cheryl Roettger, Sherry Brubaker, Shan Gil, Shirley Devan, Alice Kopinitz, Adrienne Frank; **Second row:** Jeff Honig; **Back row:** Rob Nichols, Brad Glasebrook, Jean Balutanski, Janet Curtis, Sue Mutell, Connie Reitz, Gary Driscole, Jen Harrigan, Rick Brown. (**Not pictured:** Judy Kinshaw-Ellis, Linda Morse, Mike O'Brien, and Gary West).

Love trees? Then check out these linked resources:

Listen to or read the article *What we owe our trees: Forests fed us, housed us, and made our way of life possible. But they can't save us if we can't save them* by Jill Lepore, published online by The New Yorker magazine, May 22, 2023.

Learn more about other Tree Stewards programs at treevirginia.org, where you can also download the free training manual which "includes 10 units and select Tree Steward stories." Topics include:

- Unit 1: Tree Anatomy
- Unit 2: Tree Physiology
- Unit 3: Environmental Factors Affecting Trees
- Unit 4: Tree Identification
- Unit 5: Tree Selection
- Unit 6: Tree Planting and Care
- Unit 7: Tree Pruning
- Unit 8: Tree Problems and Diagnosis
- Unit 9: Invasive Species in Virginia
- Unit 10: Trees & People in Community

Pedal the Parkway:

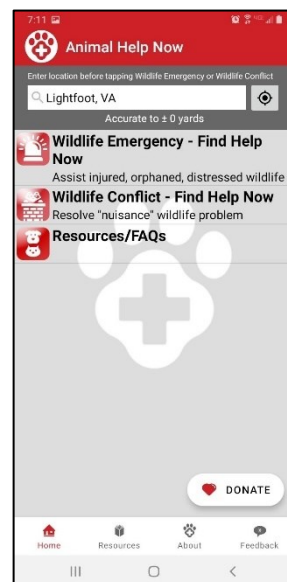
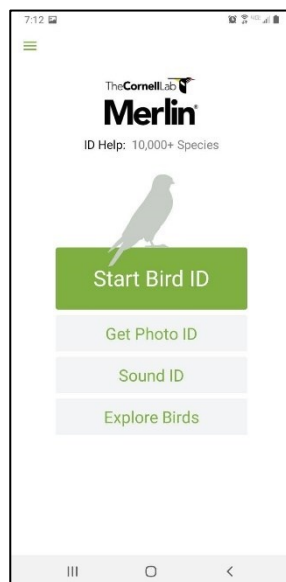
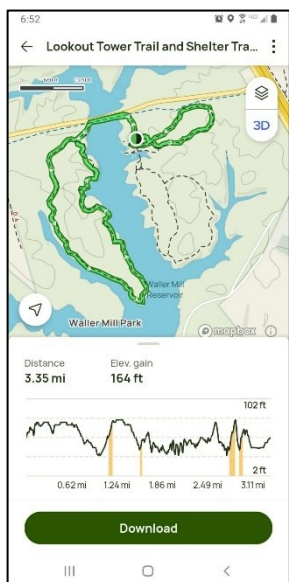
Nature Apps and Snap Bracelets at HRC Education Outreach Booth by Claire White

Pedal the Parkway is an annual spring event sponsored by the [National Park Service](#). During the event a portion of the scenic Colonial National Historic Parkway is closed to all vehicular traffic for a full weekend. With support from [BikeWalk Williamsburg](#) about 8 miles of road, often with view of the James River, becomes open to bikers and walkers. This year seven Historic Rivers Chapter (HRC) Master Naturalists took turns greeting and engaging attendees of the event on Saturday May 6th. Over 90 interactions with a diverse group of adults and children occurred. MJ O'Bryan, Jenny DeVasher, Barb Neis, and Claire White took the first shift and helped set up the tent, located at the back of Jamestown Settlement parking lot along with tents from other local organizations and businesses. Emily Argo, Barb Creel, and Marie Robertson joined Claire for the second shift.

After perusing the many bike tents, visitors that stopped by the HRC booth had the opportunity to learn about apps commonly used by Master Naturalists when exploring the great outdoors. A few of the apps highlighted at the event included [AllTrails](#), [Seek by iNaturalist](#), [Merlin Bird ID](#) and [Animal Help Now](#), all pictured below. Visitors had the chance to scan QR codes for Apple or Android smartphones and immediately download the free apps or take a flyer with the app info home. Children who visited the tent explored the many animal specimens from our collection and received a "snap bracelet" with a strip of animal stickers to increase their awareness of animals they might see on the parkway.



Photos above: Left, two youth visitors examine a real turtle shell at the HRC Outreach tent. Right: Emily Argo, Barb Creel, and Marie Robertson (pictured left to right) gathered behind the HRC table display.



Treasures at Chub Sandhill

Natural Area Preserve By Shirley Devan

Virginia has 66 “Natural Area Preserves” which are organized under **Virginia’s Department of Conservation and Recreation** – representing, in part, the “conservation” part of the Department’s title. “The Virginia Natural Area Preserves System was established in the late 1980’s to protect some of the most significant natural areas in the Commonwealth.”

According to the website, “each natural area preserve is managed primarily for the benefit of the rare plants, animals and natural communities found there.” So, I felt like the opportunity to explore **Chub Sandhill Natural Area Preserve** (NAP) was not to be missed. This property of 1,066 acres in Sussex County “features a series of low sandhills, sandy upland flats and adjacent riparian wetlands along the Nottoway River.”

Even better was the opportunity to visit with John Bunch, a Master Naturalist with the Historic Southside VMN Chapter and an enthusiastic and frequent surveyor of Chub Sandhill NAP. Thirteen HRC members and guests met John Bunch at the entrance to the Preserve at 9 am on a beautiful May 13 morning. One of the first plants that John showed us was Poison Oak, a plant we don’t often see on our side of the James River.

Cool temperatures quickly gave way to delightful warmth as we meandered at “naturalist speed” down the sandy path with John stopping to point out Solomon Seal and False Solomon Seal adjacent to each other for easy comparison. Soon we turned off the path to wend our way to the target species for our visit: Golden Puccoon (*Lithospermum caroliniense*). This is the only site in Virginia where this plant grows, so we crowded around to get good looks and photos of these bright golden-yellow blooms, easily distinguished from the abundant Small’s Ragwort.

Other treasures John pointed out: Eastern Pale Beard Tongue, Deerberry, Kidney-leaf Rosinweed, Spicebush, and Claspig Milkweed. We tried our hand at identifying other plants with the help of several plant ID apps on our phones. We did not need any app to identify the many Sassafras trees and saplings. “Can I take one home?” “Um...no”

John monitors several vernal pools at the Preserve, and he took us to explore one with his dip net. He discovered Marbled Salamander larvae that were almost fully mature! John said, “I was expecting to find Red-spotted Newts as the pool has been full of them. I normally use a dip net with a long handle, so I was not able to reach deeper water that time which might be the reason I didn’t catch one.”



Photos above, clockwise, top left: Poison Oak, John Bunch, Kidney-leaf Rosinweed (photo by O. Babb), Adrienne with Golden Puccoon.

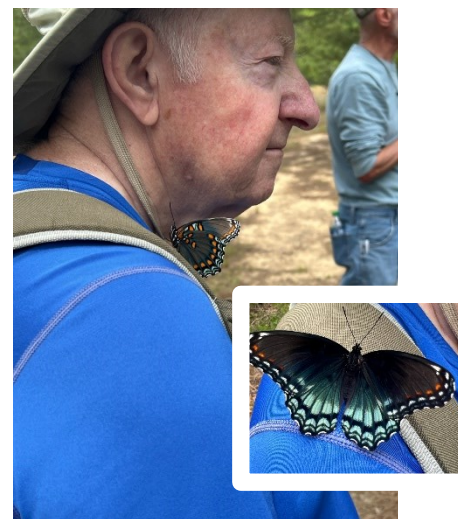


He also pointed out a **Red-bellied Water Snake** (shown above) and a **Cricket Frog** (photo credit John Bunch) at the pool. John advised us to be alert for an **Oak Toad**, only found in the southeastern area of Virginia and the smallest toad in North America – at about an inch long. On our way back, we came upon one at the edge of the sandy trail, and Oscar Babb got a quick photo (left) before it disappeared in the vegetation and, sadly, before we could summon John to share our find. We came upon two River Cooter turtles laying eggs in the middle of the path.

Of course, Master Naturalists are eager to ID anything that moves or chips. We were pleased to find Summer Azure butterflies, a Hoary Edge butterfly at the vernal pool, Common Buckeyes, an American Snout, and a Red-spotted Purple who landed on Seig Kopinitz's shoulder for an extended photo shoot. Even though we did not see many birds we clearly heard several Prairie Warblers and Summer Tanagers plus other expected species.

Our three-hour tour flew by, and we returned to our cars with memories, photos, and grateful appreciation for John's knowledge PLUS his eager willingness to share his knowledge! He obviously has great affection for this special natural area. We're looking forward to seeing John again September 13 when he presents a program at our Chapter's monthly meeting on rare plants and orchids in the Coastal Plain.

Photo Below, left to right: Linda Morse, Wayne Moyer, Lucile Kossodo, Shirley Devan, John Bunch, Seig Kopinitz, Alice Kopinitz, Gary Driscoll, Judy Kinshaw-Ellis, Mac Collins, Suzanne Collins, Adrienne Frank, Oscar Babb. **Photo Below on Right:** Seig during an extended photoshoot with Red-spotted Purple butterfly.



Forest Surprises

By Judy Kinshaw-Ellis

Five years ago, Tree Stewards created a project in the Settlement at Freedom Park with the goal of increasing tree and woody plant species in the area and focusing on plants that would have provided food for those early free Black settlers. In one of the first stages of the project, which was and is part of the Master Gardener program, several teams of volunteers took down the wall of Loblolly Pines that lined the edge of the clearing where the Settlement is.

The primary purpose of taking down the Loblollies was to create a more natural forest edge and bring more light into the forest in hopes that it would help more species to thrive. After five years, we are seeing some growth at the woods edge. PawPaw patches are sprouting throughout the woods where they have not been seen before. PawPaws are one of our few Virginia native fruits and are the host plant for Zebra Swallowtails. The woods edge behind the cabins is full of Sourwood sprouts, a species that is abundant in the Freedom Park woods but is a good pollinator plant. Additionally, we are seeing growth on many of the seedlings that have been planted by several volunteer groups, including HRC Master Naturalists.

If you visit the park, on your way in take a look at how the Loblollies line the woods edge along the road. That is how the Settlement clearing looked in 2018. Hundreds of Loblollies were removed, and most of the stumps that remained have rotted away over the past four to five years. Some of the tree trunks were repurposed to line the walkways in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden and some were dragged into the woods to create habitat as they decompose.

Removing the wall of Loblollies also makes it a bit easier to access the woods. So far, it does not appear that people are cutting through and making new paths, which is good. What it does mean is that if you are searching for forest treasures, like the plants that grow on the forest floor, they may be easier to find. Freedom Park is home to many unusual plants, and ferns and orchids can be found near the Settlement.

It takes a while to see progress for some of the work we do, but it is fulfilling when we see the changes we can make. Stop by the Settlement when you get a chance.



Plants thrive on the forest floor.

Photo above, clockwise from the top:

New York Fern (*Thelypteris noveboracensis*),
Partridge Berry in bloom (*Mitchella repens*),
Green Adder's Mouth (*Malaxis unifolia*), and
American Holly sprout (*Ilex opaca*).

Snapshot of Spring Bird Projects:

Purple Martin Project (PUMA), OspreyWatch, and HawkWatch

From Cheryl Jacobsen and Shan Gill, Purple Martin Project (PUMA):



Thank you for your support of the Purple Martin Project. We utilized HRC funds to purchase additional gourds for the Chickahominy and Fords Colony sites. These two locations are extremely successful. On May 21st during a gourd check at the Chickahominy, there were 64 eggs and 8 gourds with lined nest cups and birds actively entering. We expect they will soon have eggs in those gourds also. Many of the gourds had six eggs which is a significant increase in productivity. (See photo provided to the left.) We will need to add more gourds next year. All the birds that hatch will return to these two sites.

On the evening of June 8th at Chickahominy Riverfront Park our PUMA group will present the Williamsburg Bird regarding the project. We will walk over to the colony site and would love to have you join us to see firsthand the effectiveness of your dollars. Our presentation outline includes what to look for in selecting a site, installation process, identification of purple martins and other swallows, migration, the migration app, population decline, use of gourds, numbers of eggs, and time frames for incubation and fledging.

From Cheryl Jacobsen, OspreyWatch:

On May 21st, Cheryl Jacobson shared a photo (pictured below) with the OspreyWatch Google Group and said, "I am happy to report that I have chicks in Kingsmill (Rivers Edge). At least two but still too small to get an accurate count."



From Nancy Barnhart, HawkWatch:

I promised a quick summary of the 2023 season at College Creek HawkWatch which ended May 31.

We managed to squeak by with a new record of 2708 raptors.

We had new high counts for Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, and Red-shouldered Hawks. American Kestrel were down and we had the second lowest number of Osprey in 20 years. (We tend to be conservative counting Osprey as there are so many "local" birds between James City County and the birds we see over Hog Island that don't fit protocol. So perhaps we miss a couple that are actually migrating). Just one Peregrine Falcon crossed this year, but two Mississippi Kites flew by. Some other fun species included Black Tern, Ruddy Turnstone, Glossy Ibis, Cliff Swallow, American White Pelican, and Red-throated Loon among others. The regular crew is Brian Taber, Bill Williams, Deborah Humphries and Nancy Barnhart with help from many volunteers including a number of Historic Rivers MNs. Thanks to all for your time and efforts!

Better Impact (BI) Project/Opportunity Descriptions

If you are interested in signing up for or learning more about one of the opportunities mentioned in the *Snapshot of Spring Bird Projects*, you'll find BI direct links and descriptions below. Project champions listed in BI. Photos are from BI opportunity pages.



Birds > Purple Martin Project – PUMA

Purple Martins are an important part of the local ecosystems in Virginia and provide ecosystem services such as consuming large numbers of insect pests, including mosquitos, which spread the disease to humans and other wildlife. However, Purple Martins are in need of suitable nesting structures provided by humans in order to reproduce and maintain their numbers... Participants will monitor and maintain already installed nesting gourds at York River State Park, VIMS, New Quarter Park, and Chickahominy Park. Participants will monitor the gourds for predation and record nesting numbers, which will be added to a national registry, called [MartinWatch](#), created by the Purple Martin Conservation Association.



Birds > Osprey Watch – CCB

Osprey Watch is a great activity. Each watcher is assigned a nest and spends at least an hour each week watching for specific behaviors such as building a nest, brooding, turning eggs, etc. Observations are then recorded on the user-friendly, internet platform [OspreyWatch](#). Information entered into the platform will be immediately accessible to users and will be summarized at the conclusion of the breeding season. HRC volunteers will work with Activity Champions to learn how to monitor nests, behaviors to study, and what nests are presently available for 'adoption'. This project is in association with the Center for Conservation Biology (CCB).



Birds > HawkWatch- CVWO

HawkWatch is a systematic and organized effort to collect standardized migration count data about diurnal raptors. HawkWatch International records species identities, as well as sex, age and color morph, number quantities, and behaviors of seasonal migrant raptors. They also collect data on weather and observation conditions. Our two current sites are College Creek along the Colonial Parkway, and Kiptopeke State Park on the Eastern Shore. This is a seasonal activity, occurring each day during migration months. Our partner for this activity is [Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory \(CVWO\)](#).

Plant This, Not That, This Spring

From the James River Association (JRA)



Mike Whitfield, Cohort XIII, suggested this resource after reading several JRA newsletters which featured native plants for the home garden in place of non-native and invasive species. Permission was received from Justin Doyle, Director of Community Conservation at JRA and the author of the [May 31st article](#), which summarized the “Plant This, Not That” features from the spring newsletters. His article gives great details why these alternatives might be the perfect alternative for aesthetics and a healthier ecosystem. He also encourages HRC members to take explore [River Hero Homes program](#) to help create a cleaner James River. Starting at home we can help to prevent polluted stormwater runoff from entering our waterways.

Trees - NOT Crape Myrtle

Plant This:

- Native Eastern redbuds (*Cercis canadensis*)
- Flowering dogwoods (*Cornus florida*)
- Sweetbay magnolias (*Magnolia virginiana*)
- White fringetrees (*Chioanthus virginicus*)

Shrubs- NOT Nandina

Plant This:

- Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)

Vines- NOT English Ivy

Plant This:

- Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)

Herbaceous Plants- NOT Mums

Plant This:

- Blue wood aster (*Symphyotrichum cordifolium*)
- New England aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)
- New York aster (*Symphyotrichum novi-belgii*)
- Wavy leaf aster (*Symphyotrichum undulatum*)

Grass- NOT Fountain grass, Chinese silvergrass or Pampas grass

Plant This:

- Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)
- Muhly grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)

Wait, What?

By Jim Easton

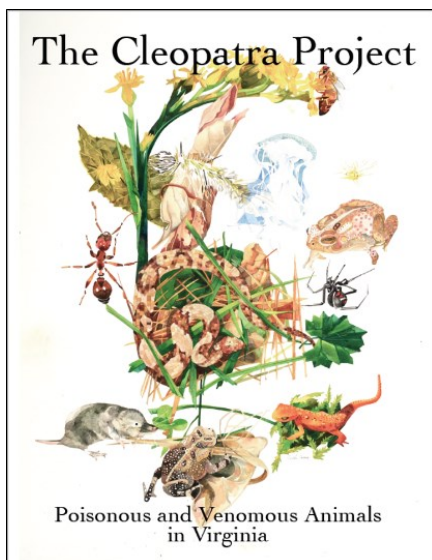
On Monday, May 15, I had one of those, “Wait, what?” moments. I spotted this juvenile Tufted Titmouse on Greensprings Trail. Spent 30 minutes or so watching & photographing mom & dad bringing it food. After one of the feedings a Northern Cardinal landed, displacing the adult titmouse. The Cardinal then stared at & inspected the titmouse, then flew off.

The whole thing lasted only around 15 seconds. Of course, I took dozens of photos, but these five tell the story. I put them in a collage to better see them in order. The Cardinal may have heard the fledgling begging, and her hormones/ maternal instinct kicked in, triggering an investigative response. Mother Nature never ceases to amaze & entertain.



CE Highlights: Recent continuing education (CE) videos available

A select list of recent CE opportunities available to watch on-demand is below. Click the title to be directed to the webpage or video platform used by the organization. Be sure to record your hours in Better Impact.



From Virginia Master Naturalists State Program:

The Cleopatra Project: Poisonous and Venomous Animals in Virginia by Old Rag Master Naturalists Kathleen Aucoin and Bonnie Beers, and Dr. Christopher P. Holstege of University of Virginia's Blue Ridge Poison Center in the School of Medicine (May 2023)

*Be sure to access the free digital reference to 32 poisonous and venomous wild animals linked in the video description.

From The Williamsburg Bird Club:

The Best of Kenya by Jan Lockwood, HRC Member (May 2023)

From Virginia Native Plant Society:

Native Seed Collection for Meadows and Gardens by Bert Harris, Executive Director of The Clifton Institute (May 2023)

The **Virginia Master Naturalist** Program is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. Interested Virginians become Master Naturalists through training and volunteer service. The program is jointly sponsored by seven state organizations and based in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation within the College of Natural Resources and Environment at Virginia Tech.

Learn more about our chapter at historicrivers.org

The Naturalist is the monthly newsletter of the Historic River Chapter (HRC) of Virginia Master Naturalists. Other organizations may not publish material from the newsletter without express permission from the chapter. Newsletter contributions should be emailed to HRCeNewsletter@gmail.com by the end of the month. If you have a submission in the works, please notify the newsletter editor. Photos should include concise captions and credits to photographer(s).



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*Congrats! You found the bonus bug, a Six-spotted Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela sexguttata*) snapped on May 29th at New Quarter Park by your newsletter editor. If you have a photo you'd like included as a bonus or feature in the next newsletter, be sure to email Claire before the end of the month.*

