



Northern Neck Audubon News

The Northern Neck of Virginia Chapter of the National Audubon Society

P.O. Box 991, Kilmarnock, Virginia 22482

www.northernneckaudubon.org

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“Let’s share”.....photo by Paul Servis

Inside This Issue

President’s Message.....	2
Bird Counts	3
Committee Openings.....	4
Board Nominations.....	5
Newsletter Update.....	5
Membership.....	6
Changes.....	6
Citizen Science.....	6
Bird Lore.....	7

UPCOMING

MEETINGS

**Chapter Meetings held Upstairs
Lancaster Community Library**

February 6th:

3:15 PM

Program:Jeff Wright

Opportunities

For Citizen Science

March 6th: To be Announced

3:15 PM

BIRD WALKS

(Please contact Frank Schaff
at 804 462 0084

if you plan to join the walk)

February 13th, Monday

Vir-Mar Beach... meet at

Sandy Dodge’s House

February 25th, Saturday

Waterloo Farms, King George

March 13th, Monday

Washington’s Birthplace

Westmoreland County

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

New Year's greetings to all! It is hard to believe that we are in the midst of January, with our crazy temperature highs and lows. I for one found our recent snowstorm and subsequent confinement restorative after a very busy holiday season. I especially enjoyed seeing so many birds at my feeders.

This has, and will continue to be, a year of change to revitalize our chapter and fulfill our chapter mission to "educate people of all ages about nature and to preserve biodiverse habitats for a healthy planet to be passed on to future generations." This is a lofty mission and challenging to fulfill, but at our January board meeting, we discussed and approved several exciting projects designed to meet this goal.

Three of the projects are tied to grants that we have received from National Audubon. The first, headed up by Jeff Wright, is a project to "advance public awareness on the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula for the management of forage fishes that are critically important food sources to flagship species as well as to the economic vitality of our area."

Beth Kendrick will coordinate the expansion of our Bluebird Box Program with funds provided by NA to build 30 cavity-nest boxes for kestrels and screech owls. Ten of these will be available for purchase by private homeowners, and twenty will be assigned to places where their use can be documented.

The third grant will help us prepare for the 20th anniversary of Hickory Hollow by instituting a comprehensive update of signage, species identification and any other improvements our budget will allow. I will head up this project and will invite collaboration from other like-minded organizations.

On Saturday, January 28th, we will have our first walk of 2017 at Belle Isle State Park. Frank Schaff, Jeff Wright and Melissa Gross have planned several walks that will take us into new territories at the far reaches of our chapter area.

Beginning February 6th, we will open the second half of our program year with another energetic, humorous and informative presentation by Jeff Wright on Citizen Science Opportunities for the Northern Neck.

Citizen Science is integrated in all aspects of what our chapter does. On our walks, we document and report all birds sighted. During our programs we have introduced citizen projects and demonstrated how we can use technology to report individual observations to important data collection sites, such as eBird and the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas. Our three grant projects will provide actual physical resources to enable more participation in citizen science activities.

One of my personal goals as president has been to go through all chapter materials that have collected over many years. I often reread old newsletters to see what our members were doing and what their concerns were. In the November-December 2007 issue, then President Peter Saam summarized the feedback from a Fall Members' Meeting with these suggestions:

- Becoming more actively involved in advocacy movements conservation efforts.
- Finding ways to appeal to and get younger people involved.

- Doing more to be a public presence through outreach activities.
- Seeking ways to become more involved in *all* of the Northern Neck.

How about that! All of these were discussed at our most recent board meeting.

As I have often said, this is an amazing chapter. It is changing just as our world is changing, but our members are dedicated and proactive in the effort to fulfill our mission.

I am very proud of our energetic board and look forward to working with them as we move forward.

Nancy Garvey, President

BIRD COUNTS

In 2016 the Northern Neck inaugurated its participation in the annual Christmas Bird Count. There were, over the 4-5 hour period:

- 37 participants
- 900 total birds counted
- 91 species identified

Why are bird counts useful here on the Northern Neck? Here are some reasons:

Bird populations are dynamic: they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team thereof could hope to document and understand the complex distribution and movement of so many species in so short a time.

Scientists use information from the Great Backyard Bird Count and the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, observations submitted to eBird by individuals and by birding groups. They use this combined data to get “the big picture” about what is occurring in bird populations.

The longer the period of data collection becomes, the more meaningful becomes the “big picture” that is drawn. Far-reaching questions will thus obtain more accurate answers:

- How will weather, especially climate change, influence bird populations?
- Why is it that some birds appear on the Northern Neck in large numbers one year and in low numbers, or not at all, in another year?
- What differing diversities exist in urban vs. rural regions?
- How will the timing of bird migrations compare among previous years and the current year?

We anticipate and hope that more NNAS members and NNK birders will use eBird in 2017 to help scientists—and all of us—understand where the birds are on our lands and surrounding waters.

Jeff Wright
Citizen Science Committee

COMMITTEE OPENINGS

I would appreciate all members giving serious thought to volunteering either for a position on the Board, or as a participant on one of our many committees, enumerated as follows:

- Hickory Hollow (monitor and organize clean-up work).
- Bluebird Boxes (work on buying materials, building and distribution).
- Outreach (implement awareness of NNAS activities and their impact).
- Conservation Easements (monitor our protected properties).
- Membership (help with processing new members and annual renewal).
- Publicity (contact newspapers about NNAS activities).
- Hospitality (support the chairman by helping with refreshments and set-up).
- Bird Walks (work on planning the walks and providing expertise).
- Website (help update and maintain our website).
- Conservation/Citizen Science (explore and help implement citizen science projects like the Christmas bird count).
- Newsletter (provides technical support and content for the five newsletters published each year).
- Programs (help plan for speakers and activities following our general meetings).

- Foundation (help manage the NNAS Foundation).
- Grants (review grant applications to the Foundation).

AWARDS

NNAS has awarded the Tri-Star Supermarket in Kilmarnock a certificate for outstanding sales. The store has sold over 3000 bluebird nest boxes built by our chapter. Audubon began building the boxes in 1980, distributing them for sale through local vendors. This project was intended to counteract the sharp decline in the bluebird population due to habitat loss and competition from invasive cavity nesters. This drop in numbers resulted in Bluebirds' being listed as a "species of concern" in the late 1970s. This community-wide effort, supported by local businesses such as Tri-Star, has helped the 36-year-old national effort to remove the Eastern Bluebird from the National Audubon Species of Concern List.

L-R Beth Kendrick, Francine Jones of the Tri-Star, Nancy Garvey.

.....Photo by Paul Servis



BOARD NOMINATIONS

In June the terms of several of our board members will be up. I am beginning the nominating process and would appreciate all members considering volunteering for one of these positions.

OPEN BOARD POSITIONS:

- **President:**
 - This is generally a two-year commitment.
 - This officer chairs the board and the general meetings and oversees and supports the activities of the chapter.

- **Vice-President:**
 - This is primarily a role supportive to that of the president. It in no way implies that this officer must move on to the position of president when the current president's term ends.

- **Directors to serve through 2020:**
 - There are three openings on the board. This position is a three-year commitment to attend board meetings and also to participate in one or more of the committees enumerated on Page 4.

Nancy Garvey
President

NEWSLETTER UPDATE

In our May/June Newsletter we announced our intention to go paperless. Since that announcement was made, only two people have responded objecting to this change.

At the January board meeting, a motion to suspend paper publication was passed unanimously. This decision will result in a great savings for our chapter; and it will simplify what has been a very cumbersome process.

Those of you who have provided us with an e-mail address have been added to the e-mail distribution list. If you do not want to share your e-mail, there will be a notice on the list serve stating that the current newsletter can be accessed on our website:

northernneckaudubon.org

Thank you for your cooperation; and we hope you enjoy reading this more colorful, timely online newsletter.

****email addresses may be sent to:
portwash@gmail.com**

Nancy Garvey
President

MEMBERSHIP

Transition is never easy. In the process of handing over the membership duties from one chairman to another, a glitch occurred, resulting in only 75 renewal notices going out. We hope that by the time you receive this newsletter, you will have also received your renewal notice. Please return your dues as soon as possible. The modest \$15 membership fee allows us to provide programs, bird walks, to build bluebird boxes and to support our conservation activities.

If you are completing a membership form, please include your e-mail address if you wish to receive the newsletter online.

Nancy Garvey, President

CHANGES

As a bird-oriented publication, this newsletter warrants an avian metaphor to describe this issue. Now that the devoted parent, Bonnie Wilson, has flown the nest, I am fledging with a good bit of tottering upon the twiggy edges. Bonnie has been superb with detailed guidance, but my digital wings still need major stretching. This flight promises challenge, learning and pleasure.

Expanding our contributor pool, as well as those "wings" would provide good uplift; i.e., we need more of you to write for us. Reading suggestions, book reviews, personal essays...all would be welcome at my e-mail: waterthrush@verizon.net

Letha Harris

CITIZEN SCIENCE

GOOD NEWS!...for the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula is that the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is February 17-20, 2017.

In 2016, GBBC participants in more than 130 countries counted 5,689 species of birds on more than 162,000 checklists! Contributing were e-Bird lists submitted from Northumberland, Lancaster, Westmoreland, Essex and Middlesex Counties.

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, the GBBC was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display the results in near real-time. Now, more than 160,000 people worldwide, from all ages and walks of life, join the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.

For at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see...counting from any location in the world, and for whatever length of time you wish.

Last year Northumberland County "rocked" the count. Will they be able to repeat their championship performance this year?

Last Year's Worldwide Numbers

Checklists submitted.....	158, 644
Total Species Observed.....	5, 589
Total Individual Birds.....	18, 180, 049

Jeff Wright
Citizen Science Committee Chair

BIRD LORE

The American Crow and its British cousin, the Rook, are attended by auras sometimes sinister, sometimes mysterious, sometimes haunting.

As if these black birds were harbingers of good or ill, the old nursery rhyme counts their overflights with a memorable chant:

ONE is for Bad News.

TWO is for Mirth.

THREE is for a Wedding.

FOUR is for a Birth.

FIVE is for Riches.

SIX is a Thief.

SEVEN is a Journey.

EIGHT is for Grief.

NINE is a Secret.

TEN is for Sorrow.

ELEVEN is for Love.

TWELVE is Joy for Tomorrow.



Photos Credit... Paul Servis

Application for Membership in NNAS - Chapter Code X50, 7XCH

Local Chapter Only Membership - \$15.00 annually, renewable in June; includes local newsletter and directory.

National & Local Membership - \$20.00 introductory (\$35.00 after), is above, plus glossy National Audubon Magazine.

Name _____ Phone _____ - _____

Address _____ E-Mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



Northern Neck Audubon Society Resources

Officers	Committee Chairs	Media
President Nancy Garvey V President Vacant Past President Mike Andrews Secretary Paula Boundy Treasurer Lloyd Dodge	Birdhouse Fred Witschey & Ron Feldman C. Easement Mike Andrews Programs Nancy Garvey Bird Walks Frank Schaff Grant Review Gary Garrett, Paula Boundy, & Trudy Quinto	Website www.northernneckaudubon.org Suggestions to: nangarvey@hotmail.com Newsletter - five issues annually submit ideas, articles etc. to: waterthrush@verizon.net

Or Current Resident

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