



# 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](http://www.northernneckaudubon.org)

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Hughlett Point on a June Evening  
“Waiting for the Birds”  
.....Photo: Harriette Fishburne

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## UPCOMING

July 6 and 22:  
Middle Peninsula Bird Walks

NNAS CHAPTER:  
Public, in-person, meetings may resume in the near future; however, first Monday in September will be Labor Day. Therefore there will be no mtg.

NNAS Chapter-sponsored bird walks will resume in September and are detailed on following page.

### PLEASE NOTE:

If you would like to submit calendar items, articles, photos, book reviews, or information on future speakers, and wish to ensure that these be printed in the September/October Newsletter, your material must be received by August 20<sup>th</sup> ..... at

[waterthrush@verizon.net](mailto:waterthrush@verizon.net)

## SEASONAL SUMMARY

For July and August, these two summer months, our chapter will be holding no specific activities. (Bird Walks ARE being sponsored by Middle-Peninsula, further information on Page 4).

**Public Meetings:** In-person or Zoom meetings, normally held the first Monday of each month, may resume in September at the Lancaster Community Library and at the customary time of 3:00 PM. If the session is to be via Zoom, however, time may be arranged to suit the relevant speaker.

Monday, September 6<sup>th</sup>: This, of course, is Labor Day, and thus obviates any scheduled meeting.

Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>: ZOOM...at 7:00 PM. Dr. Amanda Gallinat will present a program entitled: "Climate Change and its Effect on Food for Migrating Birds." Dr. Gallinat is a community ecologist working for the USA National Phenology Network.

Phenology is a study of seasonal, periodic and cyclic events that influence flora and fauna. She will speak about her own research as well as the status of current research and understanding of this issue.

Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup>: Program to be announced

Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>: Informational program about the Christmas Bird Count.

In the case of both November and December meetings, both the site and time for each is yet to be determined.

Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>: Mark this date on your calendar! Annual Christmas Bird Count.



Purple Martin  
Dad on  
Fathers' Day.

Photo:  
...Jim Greene

**Forthcoming Bird Walks:**

Bird walks will begin once more in September, after a hiatus of almost two years. They will be held on the second Monday and fourth Saturday of each month, beginning at 9:00 AM. Details will be sent to everyone who signs up at the chapter's e-mail address:

**[nnaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:nnaudubon@gmail.com)**.

Monday, September 13<sup>th</sup>: Bird walk at Hickory Hollow Natural Area Preserve.

Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>: Bird walk at Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserve. This event will be a little special, as it will offer an introduction to bird-watching and will be open to "newbies" as well as to advanced birders. **HELP NEEDED!**

The following dates are set for bird walks, with details to be posted in the September/October Newsletter.

Monday, October 11<sup>th</sup>  
Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>  
Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup>.

This November 13<sup>th</sup> date has been chosen because the fourth Saturday of that month is Thanksgiving weekend.

.....Kevin Howe  
President



Interestingly, in light of our forthcoming October presentation on climate change as it bears on migration and food supply, a new book, *A World on the Wing*, has just been published, to the acclaim of ornithologists and biologists alike.

Accustomed as we are to pondering *our* Atlantic Flyway, *our* Appalachian hawk migrations, *our* insecticide issues, *our* locally- threatened birds, like the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker, *our* native plants species, we can find in this report completely novel topography and some exotic birds. The alarms sounded, however, are all too familiar. The industrial wasteland at this part of the East-Asian Australasian Flyway (thankfully cut to EEAF) recalls Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* of two generations past. Where bird migration lanes traverse Chinese shores, there has been no restraint on habitat destruction.

This is where Scott Weidensaul begins his book, an author standing muddled-to-the-knee in the vast estuary that spills into the Yellow Sea, where the Rivers Yellow and Yangtze shed their rich, and of course yellow, sediments.. He describes the infinity of glistening mudflats and the ear-numbing windrush of shorebirds as they fly over him in their hundreds of thousands. They are an assorted lot: Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstone, Red-Necked Stints, Godwits, and threatened Spoon-Billed Sandpipers, each seeking a bounty of equally assorted foods: clams, worms, brine flies.

What they share is the crucial need to refuel for continued migration north along the EEAF, so that weary wings may rest. Biologists distinguish stopovers (simply resting sites) from staging areas (where the birds' arrival coincides perfectly with the production its preferred food.. There can be no more critical stop, or stage, than the Yellow Sea Basin.

Like so much that characterizes China, flock counts are huge, but not so huge as the development statistics attendant to the area. Swathes of crucial marsh have been drained or turned into salt pans. Two-thirds of the 2.7 million acres of mudflat have been converted to agriculture or formed substrate for power plants, prisons, graveled highways. Can it really be that 50,000 dams have been built along the Yangtze and its tributaries? The precious food-bearing silt is nearly gone, and the equally precious stopovers closed off with great stone and cement barriers.

Ready to abandon this book due the plethora of depressing news, I came upon a miraculous message: China's (official) Oceanic Administration has put a halt to most development along the Yellow Sea littoral and placed a dozen sections (albeit tentatively) on a list of Unesco World Heritage sites. Okay to read on.

.....Letha Harris

## FLY HIGH, DRAGONFLY!

**The Rappahannock River Valley Wildlife Refuge is offering a course to children ages 6-12 on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 to 11:00 AM.**

**The session will study these, the world's fastest insects, to see how they can reveal secrets about the environment. Everyone will make a "dragonfly" craft.**

**Address: Hutchinson Pavilion  
19180 Tidewater Trail, Tappahannock, 22560  
REGISTRATION via website:**

**[https://epla.org/event/fly-high-dragononfly/?instance\\_id=3978](https://epla.org/event/fly-high-dragononfly/?instance_id=3978)**





## BIRD WALKS FOR JULY

The Middle Peninsula is not too far away and, fortunately, is providing a couple of interesting bird walk options for this coming summer:

### Tuesday, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 AM

Meet at Brent and Becky's Bulbs, 7900 Daffodil Lane, Ware Neck. Special advisories for this event are that one be well armed against ticks and mosquitoes, with insect repellent.

Middle Peninsula Bird Club will guide the walk, which normally lasts two hours, and asks that unvaccinated participants wear face masks where they are either indoors or otherwise unable to maintain social distancing.

Brent and Becky's is listed by Cornell Lab's eBird as a "birding hotspot," with its seasonal residents of Indigo Buntings, Summer Tanagers and Red-Eyed Vireos.

### Thursday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00 AM

Machicomoco State Park, Gloucester, where so far over 100 species have been noted. There is a \$5.00 per car entry fee, and exact change is recommended. Location: 3601 Timberneck Farm Road, Hayes (follow Borden Road off Providence Road).

For further details on either walk, please contact [scrockett@cox.net](mailto:scrockett@cox.net), or access the Club's Facebook page.

## THE WREN'S TALE....OR WHY A CAROLINA WREN TRIED TO BECOME A "HOUSE" WREN.



*...investigating the parrot playground...*



*.....Atop a San Francisco cookie jar.*



*....And why are there no clocks that say "Teakettle, Teakettle, Teakettle," only these pesky Cuckoos.*

*....THEY may think this is a light canister, but / think it serve well as a nest.*



*....Antiques Roadshow*

*....and a Thank-You Note, Troglodyte Style.*



*.....Photos  
Caroline Kelley*



## BRING BACK THE BOBWHITE

Who doesn't like Northern Bobwhites? They're adorable, they're recognizable by almost everyone, and even non-birdy types hear their song and know that they've heard it somewhere, even if just on TV. As with Osprey, Bobwhites have been on my bird radar since I was young. They used to run around my grandparents' yard in Gulf Shores, Alabama; and, also, like Osprey, they have seen significant decline in the past couple of decades. Habitat loss and fragmentation of habitat have been key players in these losses.

Coming to the Northern Neck in the early 2000s, I was provided with the opportunity to become re-acquainted with them. I heard one in a nearby crop field and couldn't believe my ears. Then it called again. This year I've seen a pair of them around our fields, AND in our front yard! Even the neighbors are happy to hear them.

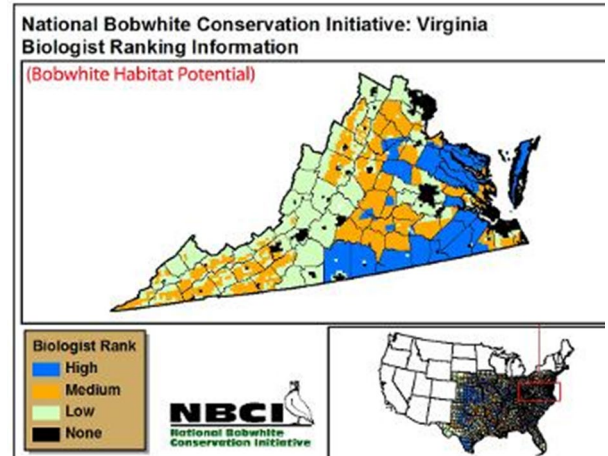
Now I'm interested to find out what can be done to help them recover. Our neighborhood area could make some changes to become better habitat for our Bobwhites.

I searched the internet and found a wonderful organization called the "National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative." Its website is a treasure trove of information. Here is the link:

National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative – NBCI  
([bringbackbobwhites.org](http://bringbackbobwhites.org))

Within this website is a document called "Bargain Basement Bobwhites: An Affordable DIY Approach to Managing Land for Wild Bobwhite Quail." I'm sharing this here in the hopes that some of you readers, maybe just one of you, will become interested in taking steps to create habitat that will encourage quail.

This is a long document, but it's an easy one and an engaging read. PLUS, it was written by a bunch of Virginians. Our state has some significant potential for achieving higher numbers of quail. If you look at the map that follows, you can see that the Northern Neck is colored (BLUE) for better quail potential.



**Blue (Habitat Potential High)**  
**Orange (Habitat Potential Medium)**  
**Green (Habitat Potential Low)**  
**Black (Rated as NO Potential Habitat)**

Consider all the tracts of land that have been timbered on the Neck. Check out such an area about a year or two after cutting and you will hear quail, yellow-breasted chat, indigo buntings and common yellowthroats.

There is hope for the Northern Bobwhite, and it's in our power to ensure and expand on its opportunities.

*Photo and Article...*

*...Melissa Gross*





## BIRD LORE

High summer along the Chesapeake Estuary brings the equally “high” flight and “high” cry of the resident ospreys. Ours have at least one visible infant, its silhouette popping up like a fuzzy jack-in-the box. The 100-mile-per-hour derecho that scoured our neighborhood in early May left the osprey’s nest unsullied: a miracle in view of the numbers of fallen giants that neighbor the nest: tulip poplars, oaks and lanky loblollies hit the ground in a five-minute time span. The ragged sticks of the osprey home remained untouched. Rootless and apparently shallow, the nest must have been woven with the skill of a weaver bird and anchored with the determination of a bulldog by the brooding female, who didn’t budge during that catastrophe. Her reward...this new baby, with possibly a sibling, as yet unseen.

There have been osprey-watchers before us. The bird’s tenacity and its worldwide distribution have lent it a solid place in sundry folklores.

Thus in Greek myth King Nisos of Megara (not a household word) was transformed into an osprey so that he could attack his own daughter. She had made a mésalliance with the Cretan King Minos...and thus displeased her father. More familiar, the image of Icarus and his melting wings appears in Pliny’s Roman Natural History. Osprey parents were said to force their young to fly as close to the sun as possible as a test of courage. Any who demurred would be killed. Harsh indeed.

Like the osprey, one can be an enthusiastic angler and trawl through the internet for “birdtrivia.”

That’s where resides an old Chinese poem “Jiu Ju Guan Guan,” in which the Ju Jiu is the osprey itself, the Guan Guan its call. Both are emblematic of marital harmony and fidelity.

In the West, myth cloaked itself in science, purporting that the osprey had two different feet: one for grasping, the other for swimming. Of course, the osprey cannot swim at all, a deficit which renders it particularly vulnerable to accident, given its water-dependent life style. In ancient European folklore, the bird’s skill was underrated: it was assumed that fish, overcome by the sight of this creature, rolled over placidly and allowed themselves to be caught. Myth abounds with irrationality, of course, like the idea that to SEE an osprey would bring good fortune, but to HEAR only its cry would be bad luck. We are, ourselves, fortunate not to so subscribe: During July and August we will not need to see the hungry offspring to know that they are there: an interminable screeching will backdrop the mid-summer outdoors.

.....Letha Harris



### Message from the Animists:

“The osprey can encourage you to jump into something feet first. Don’t overdeliberate an issue. Observe, make your decision, and jump! Be certain of your goal, have confidence and trust yourself.”

..Arin Murphy-Hiscock  
*A Spiritual Field Guide.*

## "SPOON" BILLS



## CUPCAKES FOR THE BIRDS

Birds are eating for 4.. or 5.. 6 or even 7 in this season of nesting.. This rich confection comes from Michigan's Upper Peninsula and the cookbook *Hollyhocks and Radishes* by Bonnie Mickelson.

- 2 quarts water
- 1 cup butter, lard or margarine
- 4 cups cereal (any combination of oatmeal, cornmeal, cream of wheat, etc.)
- 1 cup peanut butter, preferably the crunchy type
- 1 cup of chopped fruit, like apples, raisins, currants or dates
- 1 cup birdseed, chopped nuts or sunflower seeds

Bring the water to boil in a large kettle. Slowly stir in the cereal and cook slowly until the mix thickens....from 5 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the peanut butter and fruit. Let cool, and then stir in the seeds and nuts.

.....and for humans, the summer's bounty of sunflower seeds can be raked from the dry flower heads, tossed (unwashed) with salt and olive oil, then roasted at 250 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes.

## BIRDING ELSEWHERE

*Photos.....Jim Greene  
Charlottesville*



Jim Greene notes that there are faint gray spots on the hummer's throat, indication that it may be a young male. Within a year, these will merge and morph into the characteristic ruby red. For these photos, Jim had the camera at about 12 inches, shutter speed at 1/8000 per second and the bird AND photographer in full sun. He says that after two days and five hours of being slowly roasted, he snapped about 1200 photos.



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

☐ Local Chapter Only Membership - \$15.00 annually, renewable in June; includes chapter on-line newsletter.  
Make Checks payable to NNAS.

☐ National & Local Membership - \$20.00 introductory (\$35.00 after), is above, plus glossy National Audubon Magazine.  
Make checks payable to "National Audubon Society"

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to P.O. Box 991, Kilmarnock, Virginia 22482



### Northern Neck Audubon Society Resources

Northern Neck Audubon Society Resources		
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Kevin Howe Melissa Gross Paula Boundy Paula Boundy		Website: <a href="http://www.northernneckaudubon.org">www.northernneckaudubon.org</a> suggestions to: <a href="mailto:nnas1970@gmail.com">nnas1970@gmail.com</a> Newsletter - five issues annually submit ideas, articles etc. to: <a href="mailto:waterthrush@verizon.net">waterthrush@verizon.net</a>

### Directors

Directors		
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