



Field Notes

The Newsletter of the Peninsula Chapter - Virginia Master Naturalist Program

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Summer 2020

Our Volunteer Work Flourishes

As summer progressed, COVID-19 and soaring temperatures continued to keep us indoors.

Despite these barriers, PMN members still found safe ways to get outside and volunteer. Read on to see all the great work being done!

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Photo Credit: Kevin Barry

"Park closure at Mariners Museum/Noland Trail has put E-mammal in a hold pattern, but I still do plenty of walks at local parks. On April 9, I spotted my first Lady Slipper (Cypripedium) of the year at Newport News Park."

PMN Pandemic Activities

by Daina Henry

April 22, 2020

Several members have asked what can be done for PMN hours during the covid virus pandemic. Here is a list of suggestions, there are probably many others. Please remember to follow proper VMN, state, and CDC guidelines. Your safety and health are the most important.

- Nature Journaling – start journaling everyday or every week. Become the next John Muir or Aldo Leopold. Find a spot or a plant or a tree or a critter and watch it for the coming year. Journal about it. Your hours observing and journaling would count towards citizen science. Three recognitions will be awarded for the journals submitted:
 - Most artistic
 - Most scientific
 - Most unique
- Nature Photography – start an album that can be shared with the group. Id the picture, learn more about it.
- Trash walk – on your walks around town, on your street, or neighborhood, or at a park, bring a bag. Use gloves, masks, and grabbers. Pick up stray trash. Your hours picking up trash would count towards stewardship.
- Water cleanups – while maintaining safety and social distancing, either from shore or from water clean up trash. You already have gloves and mask and grabbers. Your hours would count toward Stewardship – water cleanups.
- Fishing spots cleanups – while maintaining safety and social distancing, visit the local fishing spots and clean up the trash. Use masks, gloves, and grabbers. Your hours would count towards Stewardship -water cleanups.
- Schoolyard habitats maintenance – schools are closed, no one is monitoring the pollinator gardens. Spend some time doing pruning and weeding so that when school is finally opened, the kids do not see a jungle. Schoolyards with pollinator gardens are Nelson, Carver, Epes, Sedgefield, Riverside in Newport News. Your hours would count toward stewardship schoolyard habitats.
- Schoolyard trash cleanups – schools are closed, no one is monitoring the trash. Maintain proper safety and social distancing. Use masks, gloves, grabbers. Your hours would count toward stewardship.
- Water quality testing – new team members are always encouraged.
- Citizen science – bird watches, frog watches, turtle watches etc.

Endview Plantation

Photo Credit: Daina Henry

Osage orange sapling across from its “momma”.
Endview project to reline the driveway.



This plant is 5 feet tall or larger, it was
identified by Megan Tierney as an
Evening Primrose.



Pollinator Garden at R.O. Nelson Elementary School

Photo Credit: Daina Henry

Volunteers have been working at R.O. Nelson in Newport News to clean up the pollinator garden and to widen the path to allow mowers to go through.



Charlotte Boudreau has been organizing the crew at the Nelson garden.



Peninsula Chapter

PMN Clean Ups

Photo Credit: Daina Henry



Daina Henry, Chris Gwaltney, and Laura Marlowe cleaned up Lucas Creek, collecting three bags of trash in two hours!



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PMN Clean Ups

Photo Credit: Merry Kennedy



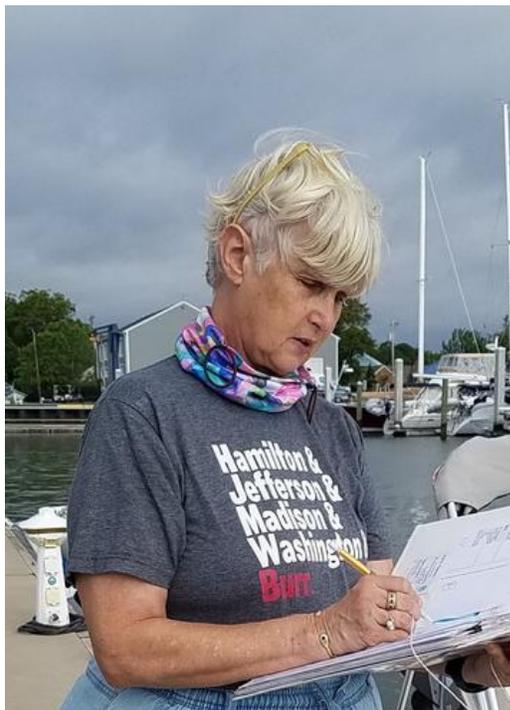
Merry Kennedy cleaned up along the Mariner's Multipurpose Trail during the quarantine.



PMN Volunteers Helping Our Waterways



June Hartzler helping with testing at Lucas Creek water testing site.
Photo Credit: Daina Henry



Daina Henry testing the water at Hampton River.
Photo Credit: Daina Henry



Linda Boone and her oysters from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.
Photo Credit: Linda Boone

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E-Mammal Camera, Mariner's Museum Park & Noland Trail

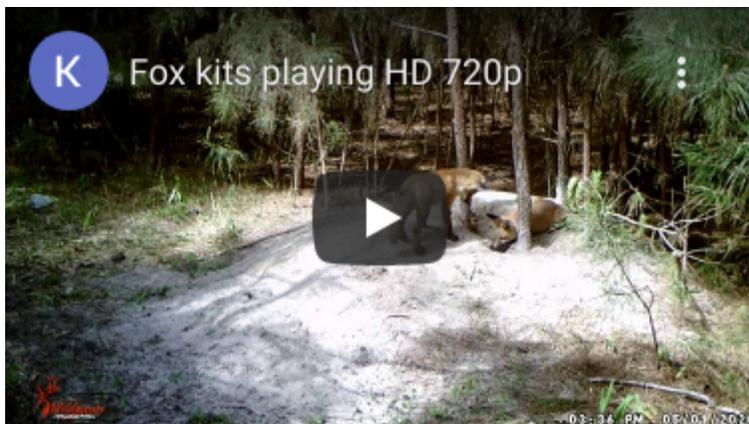


At the end of April, the E-Mammal camera that overlooked the fox den discovered back in March revealed a family of foxes!

In the course of 1 week, the camera captured approximately 4,000 images of the family.

The camera was able to document the fox kits as they grew bigger. It also captured other animals at the den, including a surprise visitor: a river otter!

Kevin Barry created a video of the fox kits playing. Enjoy!



Peninsula Chapter

PMN Book Club

This year, the PMN began a Book Club. Members read books about nature and then give a review for the club.

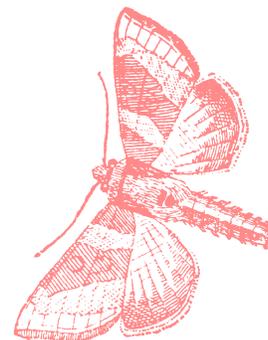
Here is a list of titles that have been read so far, with a short note about each book from the reader!

Nature Book Suggestions

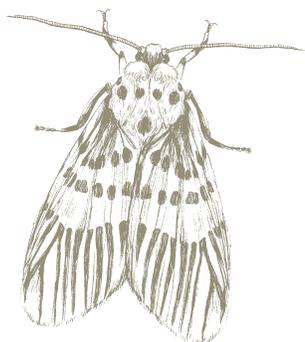
Read?	Title	Author	Genre	Notes	Suggested by
	Animal, Vegetable, Miracle	Kingsolver, Barbara	Memoir	Essays about eating local and the environment	Bonnie Baffer
	Bear With Me, My Dear	Kooka, David	Humor	Nature tales from Harrisonburg VA	Jackie Spencer
	Beautiful Swimmers	Warner, William	Non-fiction	Life cycle of blue crabs in the Chesapeake Bay	Bonnie Baffer
	Bill McKibben Reader	McKibben, Bill	Memoir	Essays about ecology and the importance of nature	Bonnie Baffer
	Bringing Nature Home	Tallamy, Douglas	Non-fiction	Ways to increase habitat in your yard. Has a good list of native plants for our region.	Bonnie Baffer
	Chesapeake Requiem	Swift, Earl	Memoir	Author lives on Tangier Island, VA for a year	Anne Owens
	Ecology of a Cracker Childhood	Ray, Janisse	Memoir	Growing up near long leaf pine forests in GA.	Bonnie Baffer
	Fish Diseases and Disorders, vol. 2	P.T. Woo	Non-fiction	How environment and chemicals affect fish	Liza
	Flight Behavior	Kingsolver, Barbara	Fiction	Scientist studies monarch butterflies in VA	Bonnie Baffer
	From the Bottom Up	Regrache, Chad	Memoir	Cleaning trash from Mississippi River.	Bonnie Baffer
	Journey North (A)	Hall, Adrienne	Memoir	Nature observed while hiking the App. Trail.	Bonnie Baffer
	Lost Words	McFarlane, Robert	Poetry	Beautiful illustrations of nature words	Meera Rao
	Mrs. Greenthumbs Plows Ahead	Danz, Cassandra	Non-fiction	Essays about gardening.	Bonnie Baffer
	Sand County Almanac (A)	Leopold, Aldo	Memoir	Beautifully written in 1940s but modern issues	Linda
	Song of the Trees	Haskell, David	Memoir	Scientist observes trees for a year	Charlotte Boudreau
	The Prodigal Summer	Kingsolver, Barbara	Fiction	Novel about living in the mountains of TN.	Bonnie Baffer
	Touch a Butterfly	Sayre, April	Non-fiction	Attracting nature to your yard, activities to do with kids.	Bonnie Baffer
	Up	Herr, Patricia	Memoir	Hiking mountains in VT with her young daughter	Bonnie Baffer
	Vulture	Fallon, Kate	Memoir	Raptor rehab in SW Va	Maria Nissen
	Walk in the Woods (A)	Bryson, Bill	Memoir	Humorous essays about hiking the App. Trail	Merry Kennedy
	Wicked Plants	Stewart, Amy	Non-fiction	Terrible and depressing	Daina Henry
	Winged Obsession	Newcomb, Ed	Memoir	Wildlife agent investigates butterfly smugglers	Phyllis Kohlman

Book Club meetings are currently held via Zoom on the first Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. If interested, e-mail Daina Henry (dainapaupe@cox.net) for the link - it will not be posted to the VMS calendar.

Moths & Butterflies Continuing Education Webinars

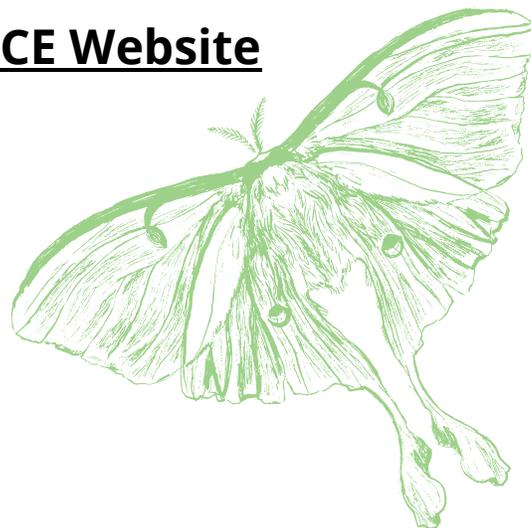


Based on the popularity of last year's Trees and Forests Continuing Education series, a series on moths and butterflies was offered this summer. Guest speakers included Dr. Shawn Dash, Jonay Campbell, Teta Kain, and Karen and Steve McCurdy. They shared interesting facts and beautiful photos about the moths and butterflies in our area.



If you missed the presentations or want to rewatch them, they were recorded and have been posted to a Google Site. It can be accessed from the VMS Homepage under "Links". You can also click the link below to go right to the site!

Moths & Butterflies CE Website



Articles from our members: David Boehnlein

Finding Nature at Home

I haven't been getting out much during the COVID-19 pandemic. No Master Naturalist meetings, no lectures, no volunteering at the Virginia Living Museum. Fortunately, I can find quite a few natural wonders right at home. One morning, for example, I got up to see a huge bald eagle right in the middle of my back yard. The rabbits that normally populate the yard were nowhere to be seen. A couple of crows looked down with displeasure from the upper branches of a live oak. They soon let the eagle know that it was unwelcome, swooping down to chase it off. The eagle took wing and flew out over Hampton Roads, harried by the crows until it was out of sight. I call that space my backyard, but I think the crows take a different viewpoint and consider it their territory. There's a fox who passes through the yard occasionally and we usually know when it's around because the crows scold it until it has gone away.

It's a pity that I wasn't able to get a decent picture of the eagle with my phone camera. I've never gotten a good shot of the fox either. On the other side of the house, snowy egrets and a great blue heron are regular visitors in Robinson Creek, hunting crabs and small fish with considerable success. But I can't really get close enough for a good picture of them. Butterflies would be easier, but I haven't seen many of them yet, although we've got parsley planted for the black swallowtail caterpillars and milkweed for the monarchs. And so, I was at a loss for a nice, colorful picture to put in a newsletter article until I came across . . .



Articles from our members: David Boehnlein

A slime mold! My eye was drawn to bright yellow patch lying atop the mulch in my front yard and I felt that I had to know more about it. One of the wonderful things about a slime mold is that it will hold still for a picture. Also known as “dog vomit”, the Linnean classification of this organism is *Fuligo septica*. I had thought it was a fungus, but upon consulting Wikipedia I found that it actually belongs to the biological kingdom *Protista*, which encompasses those eukaryotes (organisms with cells having a nucleus within a membrane) that are neither plant, animal, nor fungus. So, beyond being a eukaryote, it isn't related to dogs either.

Fuligo septica contributes to the decomposition of dead plant matter, feeding on microorganisms present in dead vegetation. Thus, it can often be found on mulch or the detritus of a forest floor. Although it is not toxic, it has been known to trigger allergies. And alas, its iridescent beauty is fleeting. Within a day or so, the brilliant canary-colored patch that had caught my eye had become a brownish mass resembling its canine namesake.



Articles from our members: Charlotte Boudreau

Tropical Storm Observations

While being shut in by the storm, my husband and I enjoyed watching the action in our pollinator garden. We have a humming bird feeder close to the back of our porch so we could watch the antics of the humming birds. The male and female would come separately to the feeder and then flit around to different nectar plants. Once in a while the male hummingbird would come and chase the female and they would take off together. Sometimes they would rest on a branch in a nearby tree and return. Besides the hummingbirds, we had lots of butterflies flitting around: Tiger Swallowtails, Black Swallowtails, a Spice Bush butterfly, and a Zebra that has an extra long swallowtail. We also had several Monarchs visit laying eggs, but I have not found many eggs or young caterpillars so I suspect the birds were at work! Finally, we watched the Goldfinches on the Nyger feeders and eating seeds from the Cup Plants and Black Eyed Susans.

At my feeders behind the kitchen window where they are protected from the rain, we saw our usual Cardinals, Titmice, Carolina Wrens, and Chickadees. We also saw Downy Woodpeckers and Red Breasted Woodpeckers on the suet feeders and my favorite White Breasted Nuthatches. On the ground, I had Thrashers running around along with Carolina Wrens. I bought a Mealy Worm feeder this year and I have had many birds enjoying it especially the Catbirds and Blue Birds for the first time. We both truly enjoy all the nature in our yard!



Pearl Crescent Butterfly on Black-eyed Susan



Black Swallowtail Butterfly on a Cup Plant



Monarch Butterfly on a Pinta Plant

Member Recommendations

Here are some suggestions from our members. Check them out!

"I recommend joining the Virginia Native Plant Society's Facebook group. You can post a photo and location of a plant, and they will tell you if it's native to VA or not. I am getting better at identifying plants growing in my yard - unfortunately many are invasive!

- Bonnie Baffer

I want to share bird "flash cards" created by Marty Brazeau. No sound effect transitions or flowers or other animals between birds. Just 84 birds to identify. Here's the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdEe-nOq4NE>

- Yukari Hughes

When volunteering, please take a minute to get a picture or two that can be included in the next issue! Email your photos to vmn.mel@gmail.com. Let's fill the next issue full of photos that show all the good work you are accomplishing! Thank you to everyone who submitted photos and articles used in this issue!

- Melissa Brosius

Peninsula Chapter

Peninsula Chapter Board of Directors

President	Charlotte Boudreau
Vice President	Shirley Chirch
Recording Secretary	Bonnie Baffer
Corresponding Secretary	Yukari Hughes
Treasurer	Christy Gardner
Chapter Advisors	Megan Tierney & Meghan Mulroy-Goldman



Member Meetings and Continuing Education

Day/Time: Second Tuesday of every month, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Location: Sandy Bottom Nature Park

1255 Big Bethel Road, Hampton, VA 23666

(Currently held on Zoom until further notice)

Committee Chairs

Basic Training	Gary Wright & Sandy Graham
Continuing Education	Maria Nissen
Community Outreach	Daina Henry
Hospitality	Merry Kennedy
Membership	Cindy Moore
Volunteer Service Projects	Tracy McIntyre
Public Relations	Ella Reilly
Fund Raising	Jim Francis
VMS Coordinator	Laura Marlowe
Property Manager	Diane Peters
Newsletter	Melissa Brosius
Webmaster	John Berry
Past President	Daina Henry

Upcoming Meetings

Date: September 8, 2020 (Zoom link on VMS Calendar)

Time: 6:00 p.m. Member meeting

7:00 p.m. CE: Wasps of Virginia by Dr. Shawn Dash

Date: October 13, 2020 (Zoom link on VMS Calendar)

Time: 6:00 p.m. Member meeting

7:00 p.m. CE: Natural History of Songbirds by Jackie Spencer

Date: November 10, 2020 (Zoom link not available yet)

Time: 6:00 p.m. Member meeting

7:00 p.m. CE: Tick Talk by Becky Nissen

FIND US!

Peninsula Chapter Website: <http://vmnpeninsula.weebly.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VMNPeninsula/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTbIGR9RcDI62oxfJSLi3Ww>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/VMNPeninsula/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/vmnpeninsula/?hl=en>

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