

The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

SPRING 2014



The Friends of Dyke Marsh

FODM Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, May 14, at 7:30 p.m., Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria, VA 22306. Phone 703-768-2525. Free to all.

Calendar of Events

May 16, 9:30 a.m. - Invasive Plant Training, see page 7.

2014 Membership Meetings
September 10, November 12.

CONTENTS

Newsletter Honored	2
President's Message	3
2013 BBS Results	4
Plants of Dyke Marsh	6
Wetlands Losses	6
Acorn Numbers Low	6

What Bird Banding Tells Us About Birds

Learn About the Mysteries of Migration and Bird Behavior

Join the Friends of Dyke Marsh on May 14, 7:30 p.m., Huntley Meadows Park Visitor Center for a discussion of bird banding and the valuable information scientists gather from these studies.

Since the 1950s, over 65 million birds have been banded in the United States, by around 7,000 banders. Why band birds? Banding helps scientists and others answer questions, like the mysteries of bird migration, bird behavior and bird ecology.

Mr. Bruce Peterjohn, Chief of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Bird Banding Laboratory-Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland, will present some of the key scientific information that has been learned from banding birds, from raptors to neotropical migrants



This Black-throated Blue Warbler has been banded. Photo courtesy of USGS.

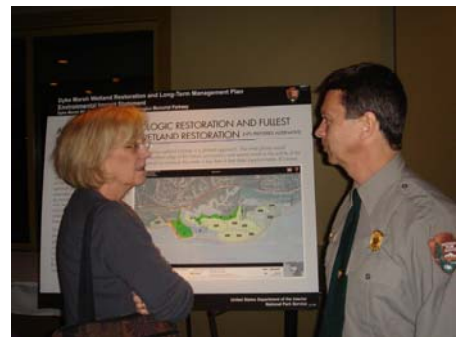
to common backyard birds. Banding gives scientists and non-scientists insights into

BANDING (Continued on page 2)

Restoration Moves a Step Closer

Thanks to many FODMers and others, the National Park Service (NPS) received around 300 comments on the draft final environmental impact statement (EIS) and restoration plan to restore Dyke Marsh. Around 100 people attended NPS's February 26 public meeting at which NPS officials presented the plan and received public comments. The Friends of Dyke Marsh support full restoration, including retaining the Belle Haven marina in its current footprint.

NPS officials are now preparing an interagency agreement with the U.S. Corps of Engineers (COE) which will outline the responsibilities of NPS and the COE based on the outcome of the final EIS expected in September.



NPS officials discuss restoration plans with the public. Photo by Glenda Booth.

In several previous issues, we have reported on the marsh's serious erosion, restoration plans and funding. Check our website, www.fodm.org, as well.

FODM Newsletter Wins an Award

Our FODM newsletter, *The Marsh Wren*, received an Excellence in Craft award with a \$200 cash prize from the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association at the group's annual meeting in February. Congratulations to Dorothy McManus, Editor, and Duncan Hobart, Assistant Editor, for producing a fine newsletter four times a year for FODMers and our friends. Well deserved! Visit http://www.vowa.org/?page_id=346 for more details and other winners.



Editor Dorothy McManus and Assistant Editor Duncan Hobart. Photo by Ned Stone.

BANDING (Continued from page 1)

many facets of nature and the world around us that otherwise may remain unknown.

Mr. Peterjohn is a wildlife biologist and ornithologist who has published numerous papers and books on the subject. He coordinates the management of all data for birds banded in the U.S. and its territories.

The program is cosponsored by the Audubon Societies of the District of Columbia and of Northern Virginia and the Northern Virginia Bird Club. We hope you can join us!

FODM Newsletters Archived

In an effort to preserve our history, the Friends of Dyke Marsh have donated 20 years of our newsletter, *The Marsh Wren*, to the Virginia Room of the Fairfax County Library system. Laura S. Wickstead, the librarian, emailed, "You are quite a remarkable organization. I am very pleased to add the journal to the Virginia Room collection. We will bind them in several volumes." In a thank you letter, she wrote, "The newsletters document a chapter of our county's history that all of us can take pride in. The rescue and reclamation of Dyke Marsh demonstrate the miracles that citizen activists and an enlightened local government can achieve." The newsletters will be available to the public sometime later this summer. You can check The Virginia Room, City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax, VA 22030-2514 and email va.room@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Two decades of Marsh Wrens are now archived.

Sunday Morning Bird Walks

Bird walks are held every Sunday morning, all year. Meet at 8 a.m. in the south parking lot of the Belle Haven picnic area. Walks are led by experienced birders and all are welcome to join us.

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Visit our website at

www.fodm.org

or on [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/fodm)

for more information about us, our programs and how you can join the FODM.

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The Marsh Wren is a quarterly publication of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization. Letters and submissions to *The Marsh Wren* are welcome. Send them to the editorial address above. Board members too, can receive mail at this address. Special thanks to Duncan Hobart for managing our website (www.fodm.org), and to Paula Sullivan and Ed Eder for their photography contributions to *The Marsh Wren* and website.



President's Message

Glenda C. Booth, President, Friends of Dyke Marsh

It's been a "ping-pong" spring weather-wise, but an interesting one. We've seen screech owls mating, a woodcock doing courtship flight displays and a red-necked grebe in breeding plumage.

FODMers in River Towers have been captivated by killdeer, tundra swans, Cooper's hawks, beavers, foxes and more. Ned Stone spotted two beaver lodges in Hog Island Gut, with tell-tale sapling trees cut nearby on April 1. Ed Eder snapped the photo at right, "Cavity Surprise."

Ospreys made a glorious return up and down the river and "our" marina boat ramp pair returned. They "star" in a 13-minute video titled "Osprey Love Nest" by William Young, an Arlington writer, who shot the footage and wrote the script. Ashley Bradford, an artist who lives near Dyke Marsh, narrates. It describes the behavior, anatomy and field marks of the pair, as well as their interactions with other birds. Visit FODM's homepage at fodm.org for a link to this video and Bill's other video featuring egrets, coots and earned and horned grebes in the area.

Other news:

- We are pushing for completion of the final draft restoration plan this fall (see page one) and elated about the \$27.2 million available to finally restore Dyke Marsh.
- George Washington Memorial Parkway Assistant Superintendent Jon James has moved to a new superintendent job at Manassas National Battlefield Park. Thank you, Jon, for all of your tremendous help and best of luck to you.
- Over 70 friends cleaned up trash on April 5.
- In addition to our Sunday bird walks (thank you, leaders), we've explored Dyke Marsh with Alexandria Walkers, Girl Scouts and school groups.
- Over 70 people heard Chris Hobson's excellent talk on frogs and toads at our March 2 meeting. His Frogs and Toads of Virginia Guide, describing Virginia's 27 species and their calls CD is available for \$9.95 at shopdgif.com, the Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries website.
- Don't miss Ed Eder's beautiful photos and more on our Facebook page.

Destroying Bird Food

For the second year, we expressed concerns about Fairfax County's helicopter spraying to "suppress" fall cankerworms in their larval stage. FODMers met with officials on March 25 at which Board member Katherine Wychulis made an excellent presentation, stressing that the pesticide, Btk, kills all moth and butterfly caterpillars, not just cankerworm caterpillars, when warblers and other birds are migrating through our area. Caterpillars are a major food source for many birds, especially birds feeding their young. We and our colleagues from the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and Friends of Mason Neck State Park urged the county to take another

approach. Since then, the Northern Virginia Bird Club has joined the effort. FODMers also maintained that the helicopter noise, proximity and spraying could adversely affect Dyke Marsh's two bald eagle nests.



A spring walk found this Dyke Marsh resident in hiding. Photo by Ed Eder.

The National Park Service (NPS) does not spray or allow this spraying on their properties. A map of the areas targeted is on the Fairfax County website. For information, contact Joan Allen, joan.allen@fairfaxcounty.gov.

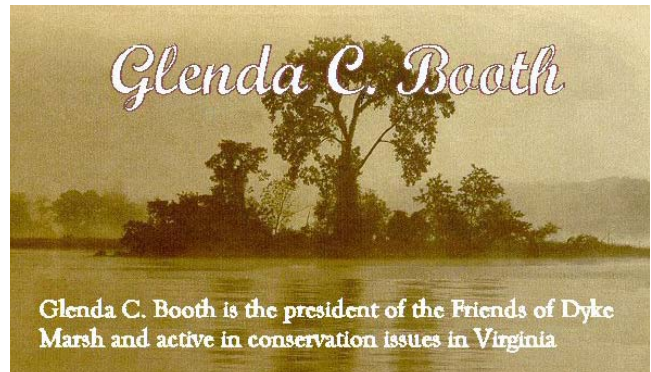
Congressman Dingell to Retire

Michigan Rep. John Dingell, the longest-serving lawmaker in congressional history, announced that he will not seek re-election to the U.S. House of Representatives this year. He helped write many major bills, including the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, Affordable Care Act and Medicare. Few know that it was Congressman Dingell's 1959 bill that added Dyke Marsh to the national park system. In 2009, he attended our 50th anniversary event commemorating enactment of the bill. Best wishes, Congressman Dingell.

Bigger Picture

Congress is now considering President Obama's proposed budget for fiscal year 2015, which would restore \$55 million in funds for NPS after several years of cuts. Virginia's national parks generated nearly \$1 billion in economic benefits through more than 23 million visits in 2012, reported Ralph Berrier, in the March 3 Roanoke Times.

Department of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell has said that she is in the "forever business." So are we. Advocating for conservation and restoration is a noble cause. Thanks for all that you do.



The Results of the 2013 Dyke Marsh Breeding Bird Survey

BY LARRY CARTWRIGHT, BBS Survey Coordinator

The 2013 Dyke Marsh Breeding Bird Survey was conducted as part of a continuing biological inventory of this hopefully soon-to-be-restored tidal wetland. The breeding status of each species was determined by means of behavioral criteria. Species were placed into one of four categories: confirmed breeder, probable breeder, possible breeder, and present.

The official survey was conducted between Saturday, May 25 and Thursday, July 4, but any data collected outside of this period that confirmed a breeding species was entered into the database. This permitted us to weed out most migrants that do not use the marsh to breed. I also included information provided from the Sunday morning walks and reliable individuals to supplement data reported by the survey teams. The survey tract encompassed the Belle Haven picnic area, the marina, the open marsh, the Potomac River shoreline, and the surrounding woodland from the mouth of Hunting Creek to Morningside Lane. The volunteers reported 76 species at Dyke Marsh between May 25 and July 4. By the time data collection was completed, they had collectively categorized 36 species as breeders, 11 species as probable breeders, and 17 species as possible breeders. An additional 12 species were present in the survey tract during the official reporting period, but were considered not to be in suitable breeding habitat.

Most of the regular songbirds that occupy Dyke Marsh during the breeding season were again reported in 2013. Observers found Great Crested Flycatchers, Blue Jays, Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Cedar Waxwings, Orchard Orioles, and other common species busily attending to fledged youngsters as the breeding season progressed.



Cedar Waxwing was among the songbirds confirmed as breeders again in 2013. Photo by Ed Eder.

Two volunteers even located a Warbling Vireo nest with nestlings, never an easy task. So I was quite surprised to see that we documented nest building for Eastern Kingbirds and Baltimore Orioles and confirmed both as breeders, but reported no young for either species. That means that nesting activity was clearly underway for these birds, but that they either failed to produce offspring or we missed seeing them. The situation seems odder because Eastern Kingbirds and Baltimore Orioles are two of the most prolific breeders at Dyke Marsh.

The inability to confirm Yellow Warbler as a breeder in 2013 also was totally unexpected. The species generally is confirmed with minimal effort. A pair of Yellow Warblers even successfully fledged youngsters from a nest built just six feet from the boardwalk at the end of the Haul Road

peninsula in 2012. With few exceptions, Yellow Warblers have confined breeding activities to this peninsula and the largest of the adjacent islands. In 2013 Yellow Warbler males established territories at the expected peninsula and island locations, but survey teams also discovered singing males at Pipeline Bay and a wooded area we refer to as Oriole Inlet just northeast of the Big Gut entrance. A female Yellow Warbler was identified at Oriole Inlet on June 9, suggesting a possible breeding pair. Yet we found no nest or young either on the Haul Road peninsula or at Oriole Inlet, and Yellow Warbler fell to “probable breeder” status.



Yellow Warbler could not be confirmed and fell to “probable breeder” status this year. Photo by Ed Eder.

The 2013 Breeding Bird Survey Results

Confirmed - 36 Species: Canada Goose, Mallard, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, Fish Crow, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Marsh Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Prothonotary Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, House Finch, House Sparrow.

Probable - 11 Species: Least Bittern, Eastern Screech-Owl, Acadian Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Mockingbird, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Song Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, American Goldfinch.

Possible - 17 Species: Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, American Crow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Brown Thrasher, American Redstart, Eastern Towhee.

Present - 12 Species: Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Black-bellied Plover, Ring-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Rock Pigeon, Black-poll Warbler, Wilson's Warbler.

A welcome development is the apparent increase in the Marsh Wren breeding population, especially in the Big Gut. Beginning with the 2002 survey, Marsh Wrens have been found primarily, if not exclusively, in the Narrow-leaf Cattails along the north side of the Haul Road peninsula and the main island. Marsh Wrens were completely absent from the Big Gut in the southern marsh between 2007 and 2010. In 2011 Marsh Wrens returned to a tributary of the Big Gut that we refer to as the Northeast Passage. That year a high count of four Marsh Wrens and two nests was documented. The following year volunteers reported only two singing males and a solitary nest for a high count.

Marsh Wrens were present again in the Big Gut in 2013, but in bigger numbers and with evidence of some success. On June 9, a survey team reported a Marsh Wren departing a nest with a fecal sac, clear proof of a nest with young. The highest count for a single survey was five Marsh Wrens and four nests, with singing males in the Northeast Passage and further south in a bend of the Big Gut that we call Heron Hook. When plotting out the locations where the birds were reported, I estimate that there may have been up to seven territorial males present in the Big Gut in 2013. In the area along the north side of the Haul Road peninsula, survey teams tallied a high count of seven singing males during a single survey. The location plots of these birds indicate a maximum of 14 territorial males in the north during the 2013 survey compared to an estimation of less than a dozen in 2012. Although the overall increase in the Marsh Wren breeding population is perhaps modest, it is certainly positive news.



The Least Bittern is a “probable breeder” again. Photo by Ed Eder.

The Least Bittern, a high visibility bird at Dyke Marsh, unfortunately remained in the “probable breeder” category for the second straight year. The data give no indication that the Least Bittern population has suffered population declines since the last time the species was confirmed as a breeder in 2011. The highest number of Least Bitterns seen during a survey in 2013 was five and the year prior was six. The highest number of birds documented in 2011 was only three. Confirmation in 2011 occurred only because a canoeist was lucky enough to see a Least Bittern carrying nesting material to a partially constructed nest in the Big Gut. Generally survey teams aren’t that fortunate and finding Least Bittern fledglings is hardly an easy task.

Prothonotary Warblers are the only cavity nesting warbler in the eastern United States and there are plenty of cavities available at Dyke Marsh. These birds also happen to be a personal favorite of mine. Approximately 16 males established territories from the south marsh below Morningside Lane to the upper end of the Big Gut where it passes under the George Washington Parkway. Prothonotary War-

blers seemed to have had a successful breeding season during 2013. A nest with young was reported on June 9 in an area of the Big Gut that we coincidentally call Prothonotary Bay, and the previous day an observer witnessed a Prothonotary Warbler carrying food at Pipeline Bay near the Big Gut entrance. South Marsh Inlet in the southern marsh hosted another nest initially discovered on June 16 and reported as still active on June 30.



A Prothonotary Warbler is observed carrying food. Photo by Ed Eder.

Ospreys are a big hit at Dyke Marsh and the birds did not disappoint in 2013. The breeding season began with 11 active nests in the survey area, but two nests constructed on root balls washed out by May. At least three of the nine remaining nests were reported with young in 2013, including the popular Marina nest containing perhaps one of the most photographed Osprey breeding pairs in northern Virginia. Two young fledged from this nest and by the beginning of July the juvenile Ospreys were perfecting flying and fishing skills. The Marina nest also hosted Purple Martins that successfully used the slats at the base of the platform as nesting compartments to raise and fledge young for the second consecutive year. The established Bald Eagle nest at Morningside Lane contained two nestlings in 2013 and survey team reports indicate that at least one of the young fledged.

The Eastern Screech-Owl pair was again present on Haul Road, but we have no indication that they bred or even attempted to breed. A January 29 report placed the red morph female in the same cavity near the Haul Road entrance that the owls occupied in 2012. In February she moved to a cavity further south on Haul Road. An observer reported the pair at this new cavity on March 16, but in late April the gray morph male was found back at the original cavity. The female was not seen again until June 30 in the company of the male near the Haul Road entrance. Although Eastern Screech-Owls have been documented using different cavities to roost and breed, we have no additional information to determine what transpired between this pair during the 2013 breeding season.

Honorable mention goes to Scarlet Tanager and Willow Flycatcher. Scarlet Tanagers are not Dyke Marsh breeders, but a male singing near Morningside Lane in mid-May was still present on May 26, indicating that a territory had been established. The territory seemingly was abandoned in June since the bird could not be relocated on subsequent surveys. Willow Flycatchers, occasional Dyke Marsh breeders, were present at two locations during the survey period, but presumably did not stay to nest. Finally, although a volunteer coordinator should not show emotion when conducting a survey, I have to say that the Carolina Wren was the most

SURVEY (Continued on page 8)

Meet the Plants of Dyke Marsh: Swamp Dogwood

BY PATRICIA P. SALAMONE

Two plants with the common name “swamp dogwood” can be found in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve: *Cornus amomum* (also called silky dogwood) and *Cornus foemina* (also called stiff dogwood). The two plants are so similar that the best way to tell them apart is to examine the pith in second-year wood, which is brown in *Cornus amomum* and white in *Cornus foemina* (as those who have been on a Dyke Marsh plant walk with Dr. Elizabeth Wells will know!)

Swamp dogwoods are native to Virginia and are typically found in moist lowland areas, swamp borders, floodplains, shrub wetlands, and stream and pond banks. Their national wetland status indicator for the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain region is FACW (facultative wetland), meaning that they usually occur in wetlands but may occur in non-wetlands.

The genus name “Cornus” comes from the Latin word for “horn”; this is thought to refer to the hardness of the wood. The specific name of the silky dogwood, “amomum,” is a Latinization of the Greek word for a type of Indian spice plant; the common name refers to the small silky hairs on the twigs and leaf undersides. Foemina, not surprisingly, means “feminine”, this plant is also known as *Cornus stricta*, meaning “upright.”



Swamp Dogwood, *Cornus foemina*. Photo by W.D. and Dolfia Bransford, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Though the swamp dogwood’s small white flowers lack the familiar petal-like bracts of its showier cousin, the flowering dogwood tree (*Cornus florida*), they make up for it in their profusion, growing in large, lacy-looking flat-topped clusters (cymes) that bloom in late spring to early summer.

Both swamp dogwoods are perennial and deciduous. The leaves are oval or elliptical in shape, 2-4 inches long, **DOGWOOD** (Continued on page 7)

Coastal Wetlands Losses Continue

The U.S. is losing 80,000 acres of coastal wetlands each year to development, sea level rise, forestry practices and other causes, up from 60,000 acres lost per year during the previous study, concludes a November 2013 report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries. Freshwater forested wetlands declined at the highest rate, with a drop of 405,740 acres between 2004 and 2009. The study noted some increases in some types of wetlands, including freshwater shrub and emergent wetlands.

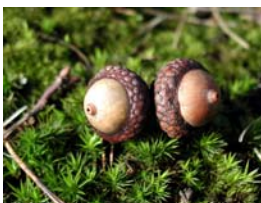
In 2009 in coastal U.S. watersheds, there were around 4.1 million acres of wetlands. Approximately 84 percent were freshwater and 16 percent saltwater.

The report’s authors argue that wetlands are vital to the survival of fish and wildlife, help sustain coastal fisheries and outdoor recreation industries, improve water quality and protect coastal communities from the effects of severe storms. Wetlands also can detoxify runoff from residential, agricultural and urban areas. “With almost half of the U.S. population living in coastal counties, continued loss of coastal wetlands means less protection for those communities from strong storms, such as Superstorm Sandy,” according to NOAA’s press release.

Darryl Fears, writing in the December 9 Washington Post, reported, “Virginia estimates that half of the wetlands that existed in the colonial period have been lost over time to farming and development.”

Read the report at <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/>.

Acorn Numbers Low Last Year



Acorns. Photo: public-domain-image.com.

Virginia’s acorn crop was very light last year, announced The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) Virginia officials in November, citing weather, insects and disease as possible factors affecting crop levels.

Acorns are an important source of forest regeneration and a preferred food for wildlife, including white-tailed deer, black bears and wild turkeys.

VDOF Research Program Manager Jerre Creighton said, “Acorn production varies widely – from nearly zero to a quarter million or more acorns per acre. Different locations, years, species and even individual trees produce extremely different crops, and heavy ‘bumper’ crops occur only every two to seven years.”

Gary Norman of VDGIF said, “Acorn production in Virginia in 2013 was low – comparable to the previous low in 2008. The white oak crop appeared to uniformly fail across the state, while some pockets (generally in eastern Virginia) of good red oak production were found. Mast production has alternated from high to low levels since 2010. The impacts of acorns on wildlife populations are extensive and complex. And they are most dramatic where there is little diversity of habitat types and few alternative food sources to acorns.”

You Can Help Restore Dyke Marsh

The part of Dyke Marsh along the Haul Road is overrun with non-native, invasive plants, like English ivy, multi-flora rose and more. In the summer, porcelain berry vines smother beneficial native plants and habitat. Generally, invasive plants have few controls or lack natural controls such as insects and disease to keep them in balance. Invasives can out-compete native plants, form a monoculture, reduce biodiversity and destroy native habitats. Unlike invasives, native plants evolve over thousands of years with other species and provide more beneficial habitat and food for wildlife species with which they have coevolved.



Invasive plants overrun Haul Road. Photo by T.D. Hobart.

On May 16, you can learn how to identify and control invasive plants when National Park Service biologist Erik Oberg will conduct a training from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. We'll start at the Mount Vernon Government Center, room 3, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria 22306 for a presentation and after lunch move to field training in Dyke Marsh. Wear sturdy shoes and plan to have fun! This is free, but please sign up by contacting Erik at 703-289-2542 or erik_oberg@nps.gov by May 1, 2014.

U.S. Park Police, Emergency Number: 202-610-7500

Welcome New FODM Members

We welcome our **New Regular Members:** Jeff Wneck & Ana Arguelles, Peggy Bestrain, Mr. Mike Bishop, Allison Campbell, David M. Cleveland, Mark Dyer & Karen Cooper, Susan Crawford, John & Tam Davis, Mr. & Mrs. Chris & Kat Dyer, Mary Engle, Laura & Greg Fleming, Ms. Mary Ellen Freesland, Diana Handy, Mr. Scott E. Hodgkins, Ms. Sarah M. Imholt, Miles Liss, Stephanie Martin, Allen & Gail Polsby, Marc Ribaud, Julia Rice, Peter & Molly Ross, John Schalow, Phil Silas, Katherine Smitherman, Lisa Sprague, Ms. Kimberley Egerton Thompson, John Tolleris. And a special thanks to regular member John Lawson, now a **Life Member**.

DOGWOOD (continued from page 6)

with entire (not toothed) margins, placed opposite one another along the stem. They have conspicuous veining. The fall foliage color is variable, and can range from dull greenish yellow to a colorful red-purple. Silky dogwood is considered a medium sized shrub (height up to 12 feet) and has a rounded form; it tends to sucker and form clumps or thickets. Stiff dogwood is considered a large shrub or small tree, growing to 20 feet in height, with multiple trunks.

The swamp dogwood fruit consists of clusters of berry-like drupes (fleshy, one-seeded fruits), about 1/4 inch in diameter, which ripen in late summer to a dark bluish or purple color. The fruit is attractive to birds.

When the silky dogwood plant is young, its stems can be bright or purplish red from fall through early spring, turning reddish-brown in the summer. As the shrub matures, the stems remain reddish-brown year-round, and later gray. Cultivars of the similar-looking red osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera* or *sericea*), with their bright red stems, are popular plants for providing winter interest in gardens.

FODM Membership - Dues and Contributions

Support the Friends of Dyke Marsh by becoming a member or renewing your membership. Benefits include the Friends' quarterly publication, *The Marsh Wren*; quarterly membership meetings with knowledgeable speakers; Sunday morning bird walks and notification of activities in and around the marsh. Most importantly, your membership lends your voice in support of the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve. We encourage you to save paper (trees) and mailing costs by becoming a member or renewing your membership online at www.fodm.org. Just click on the "New Member" or "Renewal" button on our membership page to make your tax-deductible contribution by credit card or from your bank account securely through PayPal. If you prefer, you can send a check, payable to FODM, P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, Virginia 22307. The annual dues are \$15.00 per household; \$250.00 for life membership for an individual. Renewal reminders will no longer be sent with *The Marsh Wren*. You will receive a separate notice by mail or by email when your renewal is due. Thank you for your continuing support of FODM.

DUES AMOUNT..... \$ _____
 ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION..... \$ _____
 TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED..... \$ _____

 NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____
 TELEPHONE NUMBER _____
 EMAIL ADDRESS _____

 Please address any questions or comments about *The Marsh Wren* to Dorothy McManus and about membership to Bob Veltkamp. You may contact them by mail at FODM, P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, Virginia 22307-7183, by telephone or by email (see page 2).

The Results of the 2013 Dyke Marsh Breeding Bird Survey

SURVEY (Continued from page 5)

pited species during the 2013 survey. Brown-headed Cowbird fledglings were observed by two reporters during the breeding season. The host parents in both cases were Carolina Wrens.

I have read several accounts that have speculated that many birds started nestling late in the 2013 season because of the cold and wet spring, and this may explain why we had no luck finding Eastern Kingbird or Baltimore Oriole young or even being able to confirm Yellow Warbler. Perhaps that is true. Certainly we found fewer nests this year than average. I do know that for whatever we didn't find, it wasn't for lack of effort from the volunteers. On the contrary, many of the volunteers have been doing this survey for over a decade, are attuned to what to look for, and work very hard finding every bit of evidence to confirm breeding. With that, I would like to recognize those who took part in the 2013 survey, whether they actively participated on a survey team or provided supplemental data independently or during a Sunday morning walk.

In alphabetical order, they are: Bob Beard, Andy Ber-nick, Dave Boltz, Glenda Booth, Ed Eder, Myriam Eder, Sandy Farkas, Kurt Gaskill, Susan Haskew, Gerry Hawkins, Elizabeth Ketz-Robinson, Dorothy McManus, Ginny



This red-morph female of the Eastern Screech-Owl pair was observed in a nest cavity. Photo by Ed Eder.

McNair, Larry Meade, Roger Miller, Elton Morel, David "Nick" Nichols, Laura Plaze, Marc Ribaud, Rich Rieger, Don Robinson, Jessie Strother, Paula Sullivan, John Symington, Maggie Symington, Bill Whitacre, Brett Wohler, Margaret Wohler, Katherine Wychulis and Bill Young.

**The
Marsh Wren**

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