

# The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

SUMMER / FALL 2021



## Calendar

### FODM Fall Meeting

October 20, 7 p.m. See page 1

### Calendar of Events

Bird walks every Sunday, 8 a.m.

October 9 and 23, 9 a.m.;  
November 6 and December 4,  
10 a.m., remove invasive plants

See [www.fodm.org](http://www.fodm.org) and our  
Facebook page for details.

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## Wintering Waterbirds

### October 20 Member Program

Please join FODMers and friends on October 20, 7 p.m. on Zoom for a presentation on wintering waterbirds. Greg Butcher will explore the diversity of waterbirds that spend the winter in Northern Virginia and explain the difference between waterbirds and waterfowl. He will also review citizen science studies and conservation needs for birds and people along the Potomac River.

Mr. Butcher is Vice President of Audubon Society of Northern Virginia and Migratory Species Coordinator, the U.S. Forest Service's International Programs.

Cosponsors are the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, the Virginia Society of Ornithology and the Northern Virginia Bird Club.



Great Blue Heron.  
Photo by Jim Dunn

To register click [here](#) or go to [www.fodm.org](http://www.fodm.org) and click the Zoom meeting registration link in the left column.

## George Washington Memorial Parkway Superintendent's Message

### BY CHARLES CUVELIER NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS)

I am pleased to share that we will be moving forward with phase two of the Dyke Marsh restoration project. Since April, we have completed all the necessary requirements to secure a permit from the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC). Brent Steury, Tom Maclosky and I represented the park at the June hearing in which our permit application was subject to only one protest.

Thanks also to Larry Cartwright who joined us for a virtual meeting with a landowner who lives near the marsh. Larry provided an important perspective as well as data associated with annual bird counts at Dyke Marsh and along the Potomac River. This collective effort was expressed in our oral statement that we provided at the VMRC hearing and

an opportunity to highlight our partnership. The park will be responsible for submerged aquatic vegetation mitigations. This requirement is not unique and will be achieved through a cooperative

extension agreement with Dr. Katia Engelhardt and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be our project lead and handle contracting, design and construction.

In mid-August, the White House an-



Charles Cuvelier  
Photo courtesy of NPS

MESSAGE (continued on page 2)

## Welcome New Treasurer, Directors

FODM welcomes a new Treasurer, Matthew Smith, and two new members of the Board of Directors, Carolyn Bednarek and Randy Myers.

Matthew is a certified public accountant (CPA) at PricewaterhouseCoopers, an international accounting and professional services company, where he has worked closely with nonprofits and private companies. He has extensive experience in financial reporting, auditing and budgeting. He is a member of the American Institute of Public Accountants and the Virginia Society of CPAs. He holds a Master of Science in Accountancy from Wake Forest University and bachelor's degree from Washington and Lee University. Matthew loves bird watching and is helping restore native plants in Dyke Marsh. He lives in Washington, D.C.



Carolyn Bednarek is a management and program analyst with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security with experience in contract management, risk management and cost and performance analysis. Previously, she was a program analyst for the U.S.

Coast Guard. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Mary Washington. Carolyn is managing our trash cleanups and litter-related activities for FODM. She lives in the Belle View community near Dyke Marsh where she loves to walk and observe nature.

MESSAGE (continued from page 1)

nounced Charles F. Sams as its nominee for the Director of the National Park Service. Mr. Sams currently serves as a Council Member to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. He holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Concordia University-Portland and a Master of Legal Studies in Indigenous Peoples Law from the University of Oklahoma. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and currently serves on the boards of the Oregon Cultural Trust and Gray Family Foundation. Mr. Sams is an enrolled member, Cayuse and Walla Walla, of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, where he and his wife, Lori Sams, live with their four children. Mr. Sams must be confirmed by Congress before he assumes the role of Director.

The park is working in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for replacement of bridges 23 and 24 along the Mount Vernon Trail. Hurricanes Isabel and Sandy substantially damaged bridge 23 when the area was flooded, displaced the bridge piles and twisted the structure. We are including the shorter, 20-foot-long bridge 24 in the replacement project to reduce mobilization and administrative costs. The planned design would replace bridge 23 with a timber bridge meeting current design standards. Each bridge includes mill and overlay of the bridge approaches. It appears the earliest construction would occur is fall of 2022. We will be sharing updates and engaging the Friends of Dyke Marsh on this project as part of the FY22 workplan.

### Thanks to Volunteers

Special thanks to all of you who volunteer supporting the park and Friends of Dyke Marsh. Your willingness to adapt and continue to serve during the pandemic is greatly

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### Editor:

Dorothy McManus

### Assistant Editor:

T. D. Hobart

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Visit our website at  
[www.fodm.org](http://www.fodm.org)  
or on [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/fodm)

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## Friends of Dyke Marsh Board of Directors

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**Board members can receive email at [info@fodm.org](mailto:info@fodm.org).** *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 address at left. Special thanks to Duncan Hobart for managing our website ([www.fodm.org](http://www.fodm.org)).



## President's Message

Glenda C. Booth, President, Friends of Dyke Marsh

Despite the sweltering heat this past summer, FODM has had an outpouring of volunteers tackling invasive plants, leading walks, conducting surveys and more.

From February to August, we contributed 507 natural resource hours which, as valued at \$28.54/hour by Independent Sector, is a contribution of \$14,469.78 to the National Park Service (NPS). Thank you, everyone.



Jack Oliver and his family helped pull stiltgrass from the native plant site in August.

We are pleased that the stabilization and restoration of the marsh has moved forward another step (see Superintendent Cuvelier's article). We hope that NPS, which has been without a director for over four years, will have one soon. President Joe Biden has nominated Charles F. Sams, who currently serves as a council member to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. He is a member of the Cayuse, Walla Walla, Cocopah and Yankton Sioux tribal nations and is experienced in working in natural resources.

This space is not sufficient for a full report on our projects, but we have several underway. In May, with Robert Smith's guidance and FODMers' donations, a Bartlett Tree expert again treated 19 pumpkin ash trees (*Fraxinus profunda*), our effort to try to prevent the trees from dying because of the emerald ash borer (*Agilus planipennis*) infestation. The marsh is losing up to 1,000 ash trees. So far, the treatments seem to be effective. FODM started this project in 2015 and it will last 20 years.

With a NPS permit, we have installed a camera in hopes of photographing a weasel and/or mink in Dyke Marsh. These would be record sightings if confirmed. Thank you, Larry Cartwright, for yet another breeding bird survey and

thanks to the team conducting the butterfly, dragonfly and damselfly surveys since 2016. We continue to tackle invasive plants, prioritizing for now our native plant area, to help the natives succeed. We hope to expand the native plant area in 2022. Don't forget to submit photos and monitor changes at two Chronolog stations in Dyke Marsh at [www.chronolog.io](http://www.chronolog.io).

Trash and pollution are unending. We submitted a statement to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors supporting a proposed disposable plastic bag fee. We described the bags and bag fragments we find during cleanups and their harm to natural resources.

### In Memoriam, Senator John Warner

FODMers were saddened to learn of the death of former Virginia U.S. Senator John Warner who passed away on May 26, 2021, at age 94. Senator Warner lived near Dyke Marsh, cherished it and was in our 2006 film, "On the Edge." In the film, he said, "Dyke Marsh is a magnificent little oasis." Senator Warner, also a champion of a healthy Chesapeake Bay, served in the U.S. Senate from 1979 to 2009 and was Secretary of the Navy from 1972 to 1974. A dedicated public servant, he made many valuable contributions to Virginia and the country.

### Volunteering and Brain Health

In his book *Keep Sharp*, Dr. Sanjay Gupta offers guidance on how to prevent and slow cognitive decline, which can start as early as one's 30s and be asymptomatic long before it is obvious. Among other tips for building "a more resilient, productive brain," he offers this: "Become a regular volunteer in your community. Those who volunteer tend to have less anxiety, depression, loneliness and social isolation, as well as a sense of purpose." He cites a 2018 AARP survey that found that people over 50 who volunteer at least once a year have "higher mental well-being scores than those who don't volunteer at least once a year." So in the interest of brain health, for volunteers of all ages, we'll see you in Dyke Marsh soon protecting, restoring and enjoying Dyke Marsh.

### Bird Migration

Fall's bird migration is well underway. You can learn when and where birds migrate and get alerts at BirdCast, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's real-time heat maps. Visit <https://birdcast.info>.

*Glenda C. Booth*

*Glenda C. Booth is the president of the Friends of Dyke Marsh and active in conservation issues in Virginia.*

# The Results of the 2020 Dyke Marsh Breeding Bird Survey

BY LARRY CARTWRIGHT, BBS Survey Coordinator

The 2020 Dyke Marsh Breeding Bird Survey was conducted between Saturday, May 23 and Saturday, July 4, but any data collected outside of this period that confirmed breeding activity was entered into the database. This permitted us to filter out most migrants that do not breed here. I also included information provided from the reliable individuals to supplement data reported by the survey teams. The Sunday morning bird walks provided no additional data since the Friends of Dyke Marsh cancelled them in early 2020 because of COVID-19. The survey tract encompasses the Belle Haven picnic area, the marina, the open marsh, that portion of the Big Gut known as West Dyke Marsh that extends from the George Washington Memorial Parkway west to River Towers, the Potomac River from the shoreline to the channel, and the surrounding woodland from the mouth of Hunting Creek to south of Morningside Lane.

The breeding bird survey methodology uses behavioral criteria to determine the breeding status of all species found in the survey tract. Species are placed into one of four categories: confirmed breeder, probable breeder, possible breeder, and present. Despite the difficulties in conducting the survey under restrictive COVID-19 pandemic protocols, our teams did quite well. We found 75 species at Dyke Marsh during 2020. There were 46 species confirmed as breeders, 7 as probable breeders, and 13 as possible breeders. An additional 9 species were listed as present but were a combination of colonial breeding waterbird species not using a rookery inside the survey tract, species in unsuitable breeding habitat, and migrants still headed north.

A highlight of the 2020 survey was the impressive breeding success of the Prothonotary Warblers. When I became compiler of the breeding bird survey in 1994, volunteers usually found Prothonotary Warblers from the Big Gut Bridge near Tulane Drive south to below Morningside Lane. The birds sometimes used nest cavities in short snags right along the shoreline of the Big Gut or Potomac River, making confirmation of breeding rather easy. Finding other nests away from the immediate shoreline was impossible, but eventually a lucky volunteer

would spot an adult carrying food or feeding fledged young.

Over a decade ago, perhaps one or two Prothonotary Warblers began occupying territory along the Haul Road and on Coconut Island, probably because the presence of standing water and the availability of snags made the habitat increasingly appealing to the birds. In 2020, surveyors reported Prothonotary Warblers at the Marina, the Haul Road entrance, near the overlook we unofficially call Dead



Adult Prothonotary Warbler shown feeding fledged youngster.  
Photo by Ed Eder

Beaver Beach, and beyond the dogleg, perhaps representing four or more territorial males. The south marsh was represented by as many as 10 additional territories. The first confirmation of breeding came from north of Morningside Lane on June 5 where a male was transporting a mouthful of food to nestlings. On July 11, a Prothonotary Warbler was feeding two fledged young at the Big Gut Bridge, followed by an adult feeding two young north

of the Haul Road dogleg on July 26, and a fledged youngster with a parent at the Haul Road entrance on August 10. Quite impressive.

The Mourning Dove breeding season was equally impressive, even for this prolific species. They start the breeding season early in spring and continue right into late summer, and 2020 was no different. However, we found a Mourning Dove breeding pair that may hold a Dyke Marsh record for producing the earliest fledged youngsters. On March 27, a Mourning Dove was sitting on a nest with two young. The two now well-developed young were still in the nest on April 3 but fledged by the following morning. If you consider a short egg-laying period followed by a 14-day incubation and a 15-day nestling period, nest construction would have had to have commenced in late February. Now that is typical in the southern U.S., but not in northern Virginia as far as I know.

Will wonders never cease?

Most of the expected songbird species that occupy the wooded area surrounding marsh habitat during the breeding season were present in 2020. Among them were Yellow Warblers and Song Sparrows, both of which were absent in 2019 but occupied territory in 2020 and were confirmed as breeders. Baltimore Orioles were present in



Mourning Dove sits on nest with nestling visible quite early in the breeding season.  
Photo by Laura Sebastianelli

SURVEY (continued on page 5)

**SURVEY** (continued from page 4)

2019, but survey teams were unable to find evidence of breeding. They did so in 2020 with the discovery of a Baltimore Oriole nest at the Haul Road dogleg. Some of the other more notable confirmed breeders documented during the 2020 survey include Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Warbling and Red-eyed Vireos, the



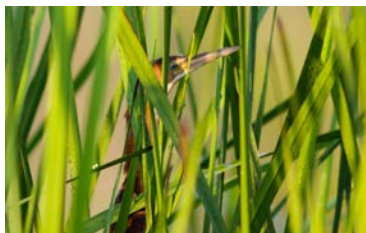
A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher sits on lichen-adorned nest on the Haul Road.

Photo by Ed Eder

extremely prolific Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Orchard Oriole, and Common Yellowthroat. Remaining conspicuously missing is the Northern Parula, which has not been recorded as a breeder or even occupying territory since 2017.

We conducted fewer canoe surveys

in 2020 than in normal years because of COVID-19 concerns but were able to gather some data on the status of Marsh Wrens and Least Bitterns from the several outings that were undertaken. A June 19 survey



A Least Bittern peers out through the marsh vegetation.

Photo by Ed Eder

revealed the presence of at least two probable territorial Marsh Wrens in the Northeast Passage, a tributary of the upper Big Gut. By August 5, one of the birds had constructed three nests, but there was no evidence that any

had been accepted and occupied by a female. Only one female-occupied nest has been reported since 2014, and the prospects for Marsh Wren recovery at Dyke Marsh

currently seem bleak.

Surveys of the Big Gut found most Least Bitterns occupying the Northeast Passage, with a high count of four recorded on June 12. The presence of a female on July 14 raised some hopes for breeding confirmation, but we were to be disappointed. In the north marsh, a few Least Bitterns occupied the tributaries of the Little Gut, but we found no evidence of breeding at that location either. Indeed, the Least Bittern has not been confirmed as a breeder for five years, which only adds to the concern for the future of this species at Dyke Marsh.

The raptor breeding situation at Dyke Marsh was highlighted in early April by reports of a Barred Owl family group consisting of a breeding pair and two recently fledged



A recently fledged Barred Owl on the right perched near one of its parents.

Photo by Ed Eder

young near the Haul Road entrance. We were aware of an adult presence through several sightings beginning in early March, but the debut of the youngsters on April 3 thrilled those birders and nature lovers who happened to be there to see them. The birds were celebrities for a few days before they began to recede into the thicker vegetation along the Haul Road and became harder to spot. The youngsters reportedly were active and healthy as of June 22, the last day they were seen.

A Red-shouldered Hawk pair made a nesting attempt near River Towers in 2020. We identified a fledged youngster in the same area the previous year, but this was the first time that the survey ever recorded a Red-shouldered Hawk nest. Nest construction occurred in March. An April 27 outing documented the presence of a fluffy white young. Our delight was short-lived as the youngster perished soon after May 5, the last day the nest was known to be occupied.

**SURVEY** (continued on page 7)

**The 2020 Breeding Bird Survey Results**

**Confirmed - 46 Species:** Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Mourning Dove, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Fish Crow, Tree Swallow, N. Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Prothonotary Warbler, Common

Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

**Probable - 7 Species:** Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Purple Martin, Marsh Wren, American Redstart, Indigo Bunting.

**Possible - 13 Species:** Hooded Merganser, Wild Turkey, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Least Bittern, Green Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, American Crow, Brown Thrasher, Northern Parula, Scarlet Tanager.

**Present - 9 Species:** Rock Pigeon, Whimbrel, Ring-billed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Black Vulture, Alder Flycatcher, Bobolink, Blackpoll Warbler.

# Meet the Plants - Narrow-leaved Cattails

BY ELIZABETH FORTSON WELLS



Narrow-leaved Cattail.  
Photo by  
Elizabeth Fortson Wells

Narrow-leaved cattails (*Typha angustifolia* in the family Typhaceae) are common in Dyke Marsh along the Haul Road trail, the wooden bridge of the George Washington Memorial Parkway's bike path across the Gut and in similar habitats along the Potomac River. They are native, herbaceous perennials, often occurring in almost pure stands and are densely colonial from rhizomes. They are semi-aquatic plants, emergent from shallow water or very wet soil, with erect stems bearing long leaves about 0.25 inch wide and unbranched, dense inflorescences. Pollen cores

of Dyke Marsh show that they have dominated parts of Dyke Marsh for thousands of years, since the glaciers melted and raised the sea level to the current level of Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River.

Cattails have unisexual, very numerous flowers, attached to short bristles, in a very dense, elongated brown spike. The male (staminate) flowers are found early in the growing season in the upper part of the spike, separated from the lower female portion of the spike by about one to four inches of bare stalk. The male flowers fall off after wind pollination is completed, leaving a thin bare stalk above the remaining spike of female flowers. The female (pistillate) flowers with bristles and small one-seeded fruits, which develop after wind pollination, comprise the lower part of the brown spike that remains for the rest of the growing season and often into the winter. As the small fruits mature, the bristles dry out and expand, ultimately dispersing the fruits by wind.

At Huntley Meadows Park a few miles away, a similar, closely related species, common or broad-leaved cattails (*Typha latifolia*), can be found, characterized by leaves about 0.5-0.75 inch wide. The narrow-leaved cattails of Dyke Marsh are more flood tolerant than broad-leaved cattails and may grow in water up to three feet deep, which may occur briefly during high tide at Dyke Marsh.

MESSAGE (continued from page 2)

appreciated. In a similar spirit, we want to extend our thanks to the Friends of Mount Vernon Trail (FMVT) who have been out on the trail this summer with several volunteer maintenance projects. The efforts of this group and FODM volunteers overlap to create a positive recreational experience. Check out the FMVT's photos on Facebook.

As part of the Belle Haven Marina concessions contract, the NPS included the daily operation and maintenance of the marina comfort station as a responsibility of the marina. The NPS remains responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the nearby comfort station at the Belle Haven picnic area. FODM expressed disappointment with this decision and earlier this year requested a change in operating practices. We acknowledge there are different interests at issue in managing facilities and providing for the public, as well as obligations and responsibilities that fall within contracts, law or policy. The park has an interest in maintaining a collaborative working relationship with our friends' groups. On an occasion such as this, where there is a disagreement, we have sought out a third-party facilitator to bring together the varied interests and work toward a resolution.

I'd like to acknowledge several park staff and volunteers

who are being recognized with regional awards for their dedication and professionalism. The regional recognition makes them eligible for the national award. NPS is presenting the Enduring Service Award to Owen Hammett who has volunteered at Fort Hunt Park since 2006, with 2021 marking his sixteenth year at the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Since 2017, he has logged over 5,000 volunteer hours and his work is integral to the functioning of Fort Hunt Park.

Matt Virta, Cultural Resource Program Manager is receiving the Appleman-Judd-Lewis Director's Award for Excellence in Cultural Resource Management. This award recognizes his professionalism in overseeing the archeological investigation of the unanticipated discovery of conjure bottles likely related to the enslaved Selina and Thornton Gray family at Arlington House. Park Ranger Ahmad Touré is the Individual Freeman Tilden Awardee. He took the initiative to forge a relationship with descendants of Captain George Pointer and worked diligently to bring Pointer's story to the public. Captain Pointer was a former enslaved worker who bought his freedom, helped build the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and was the last superintendent of the Patowmack Canal Company at Great Falls Park.

**WELCOME** (continued from page 1)

Randy Myers is a retired attorney, formerly with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Solicitor's Office where he provided legal advice to the National Park Service and the Park Police.



Prior to holding that position, he was an assistant Commonwealth's Attorney for the city of Alexandria. He received his law degree from the College of William and Mary and a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia. Randy lives on Little Hunting Creek, a "sister" wetland of Dyke Marsh, and has been an avid bird watcher and kayaker for over 50 years. He is helping remove invasive plants in Dyke Marsh and providing policy guidance to FODM.

Each brings unique talents to our organization and we're certain will make valuable contributions.

**SURVEY** (continued from page 5)

The Bald Eagle nest along Haul Road, in its third active season, was popular among nature photographers despite the pandemic, and the breeding pair did not disappoint. Observers documented two young by mid-March and for the next two and a half months the developing nestlings provided entertainment to many visitors. The birds fledged on June 3. The Tulane Drive nest produced at least two young based upon an observation of a family group near the nest site in July, but the Morningside Lane nest apparently failed as volunteers never saw young and were unable to find adults at the nest site after May 11.

**Welcome New FODM Members**

FODM welcomes our **new members** Michael Arthur, Richard Birch, Lynn Blandford, Josh Brick, Nancy Buron, Alexandra Caryl, Lindsay Dubin, Julie Greenisen, John Holsinger, Louise Kefelian, David Keegan and Sally Lindfors, Tami Longaberger, Jim McIntyre, John Oliver, Adrian and Maria Ortiz, Chris Owens, Jason Patinkin, John Vail, Coby Vail. And welcome new **Life Members** D J Capelis, Margaret Chatham and Bonnie Rideout and conversions to **Life Membership** Marfe Delano, Loren L. Dohm, Deborah Hammer, Stacy Langsdale and Paul Munch.

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

Ospreys did not have a banner year at Dyke Marsh. The birds constructed 10 nests, all of which could be monitored easily from land with a scope. One nest built on a crane on a barge in the channel was abandoned, or perhaps removed, by June 1. Of the remaining nine nests, only three produced young. The nest residing on the platform at the marina fledged a solitary young in early August. The other two successful nests, each producing multiple nestlings, were at Porto Vecchio.

I have been compiler of the Dyke Marsh Breeding Bird Survey since 1994 and have witnessed many changes in the breeding status and density of several avian species at Dyke Marsh since then. These events have all been recorded by volunteers. They are valuable to the continuance of this survey and I would like to acknowledge those who participated in 2020: Dave Arnold, Eldon Boes, Glenda Booth, Jessica Bowser, John Cushing, Ed Eder, Deborah Hammer, Nathan Harms, Todd Kiraly, Joan Mashburn, Nick Nichols, Roger Miller, Mary Parrish, Rich Rieger, Laura Sebastianelli, Robert Smith, Dixie Sommers, Sherman Suter.

**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 and our efforts to advocate for full restoration of the marsh. Just click on the "Join" or "Donate" button on our membership page at [www.fodm.org](http://www.fodm.org) to make your tax-deductible contribution by credit card or from your bank account securely through PayPal. For help, [info@fodm.org](mailto:info@fodm.org). 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. You will receive a notice by mail or by email when your renewal is due. A financial statement is available upon written request from the Virginia Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs. Thank you for your support of FODM.

✂

DUES AMOUNT..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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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).

## Exciting New Sightings

We have had at least four record-setting sightings in Dyke Marsh in recent months.



Roseate Spoonbill.  
Photo by Ed Eder

On July 28, several people recorded roseate spoonbills (*Platalea ajaja*), a first for the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), bird species number 293. These long-legged, pink birds swish their spatula-shaped beaks back and forth in the water to scoop up fish, crustaceans and other prey.

On August 28, Todd Kirally, Steve Bielamowicz and Sherman Suter observed a buff-breasted sandpiper (*Calidris subruficollis*) in Hunting Creek's mudflats, bird number 294 for the Parkway. These shorebirds have a dove-like head, a buff face and scaly brown and buff underparts.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper.  
Photo by Todd Kirally

They nest from June to August in the Arctic tundra so presumably this bird was migrating south.



*Strauzia longipennis*.  
Photo by Ed Eder

On June 9, Ed Eder documented a new fly species (*Strauzia longipennis*), fly species number 282 for the Parkway. Its common name is sunflower maggot fly because its primary host plant is the sunflower.

On June 21, Ed photographed a northern pearly-eye butterfly (*Enodia anhedon*), the first documentation of this species since FODM started the butterfly survey in 2016. This butterfly is typically found in damp, deciduous woods, usually near streams or marshes in mixed transition zone woodlands.



Northern pearly-eye butterfly.  
Photo by Ed Eder

Thank you all, for your keen observations.

The Friends of Dyke Marsh  
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**Marsh Wren**